

# Music & Letters

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Edited by  
A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS

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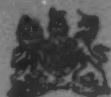
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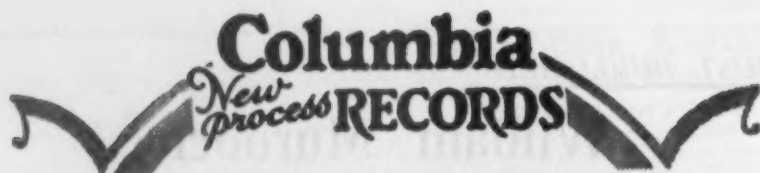
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## ON THE WRITING OF ARTICLES

THE writer of an article is often at a loss as to how to begin. If we, his readers, have watched ourselves at all, we know that we have as a rule glanced at his title and skipped his first page or two, on to where, about the bottom of page three, something caught our eye. We hunt that trail for a dozen lines and dip again somewhere else. If both were lucky draws, we put the thing down with—'I must read that some time or other'—and perhaps we do.

The trouble, then, is the beginning. We should like to begin . . . 'I say, have you ever noticed that,' or, 'how . . . ' but that would be a little too undress. It would be sincere, though; because most articles that are at all readable arise out of conversations, if not heated arguments, with friends. After one of those we feel ourselves 'fit to write.' Our brain simply seethes with clinching proofs and dazzling instances, and we hardly know which to choose. It must clearly be something arresting. Shall it be, Macaulay-like, a profound truism—'History, at least in its ideal state of perfection, is a compound of poetry and philosophy'? Or a pregnant story—'A pious Brahmin, it is written, made a vow that on a certain day he would . . . ' Or, in his desire to be all things to all men in the hope of winning some, shall the writer imitate the boy who, being warned by his father that he must get people's attention at once, began his short-story with—' "Damn your eyes," said the Duchess, as she passed the potatoes'—, thus epitomising his knowledge of human nature in one abrupt, alliterative antithesis of high and low life. Well, having written his poem by one of these means, or by some other, the best advice that can be given him is that he should subject it to severe compression. He probably will

not take the advice; but there is still some hope that his editor will restore the balance with a pair of scissors.

At last he is off, with his sail spread to the breeze. The first thing he discovers is that he knows some parts of his subject better than others. It is not good, certainly, to write of what one does not know, and there are plenty of acceptable articles containing only those things which the writer does know. Still, it is better to fill the gaps, even if it means reading a stout volume or two to do it. There is no hurry, and we want this article to be as good as we can make it. But if we feast at other people's tables, we must leave time for digestion. The facts or arguments are nothing until assimilated.

His next experience, perhaps, is that he finds himself proving the wrong point. The best cure for that is to tear up the sheet at once and begin again. There is no patching or correcting such things, because even if he can find the word or phrase that actually started him on the wrong scent, which is not easy to do, the getting the rest of it to match the correction is only useless trouble; the passage will still look chequered.

The article is to be as good as we can make it, but it can never be final. When we look at a collection of old 'Greats' essays, two things strike us. First, what a wonderful deal we knew in those days, and second, how much better use we could make of it now. From the fact that we have learnt a little about how to express things, we may argue that there is room to learn more; that the article we write at thirty may easily be bettered by one we shall write at forty. And herein lies the chief argument for writing articles at all. That great book that we mean to write one day 'when we can find some time'—on quaternions, or edible fungi, or tonality—will, of course, be final. It will probably finish us, at any rate. For we shall find time only when the almond tree flourishes and all the daughters of musick are brought low. But the time to write is now, when the day is full of engagements with interesting things and people, when a spare hour is hard to come by, and so will be put to better use. For writing is only thinking saddled and bridled and ready for a good gallop.

Then there are the questions of order and proportion. With historical order it is difficult to make the important points stand out in their proper salience; with logical, it is often difficult to know which is the parent idea that should rule the others. Some people do best by constructing little essay-kins, collecting them, sorting them like a card index, and writing from that. Some have their general idea, and take its various topics in more haphazard order, making a clear verbal connection compensate for some looseness in the plan. By either method art is most art when it conceals art. When we have

no order, when 'we faren as he that dronke is as a mous,' we put the reader to sleep:

A dronken man wot wel he hath an hous,  
But he ne wot which is the right way thider,  
And to a dronken man the way is slider.

Right proportion is a part of order. The different topics are of different sizes, of course, and it is important to get each to its right size. The way is to be quite sure what it is we are talking about at the moment. Rambling is one error, and another is the purple patch. In a year's time, when we re-read, it will nauseate us; but it will not take a year for it to disgust the reader.

It was said by Aristotle and has been repeated by others that a work of art should have a beginning, middle and end. To that, later æsthetic seems to have added that we should not be made too violently conscious that it has them. The century that lay between the sonata of Beethoven which began on a six-five chord and the symphony of Vaughan Williams which ended on a six-three has gradually made us less in love with exordium and peroration. Quiet endings have been the fashion since Victor Hugo's '*Il n'était plus que la mer*'—a fine one, if he had not engineered it so carefully. The change is due not so much perhaps to our being more modest than our ancestors as to the gradual realisation that human effort, which includes writing articles, cannot be final, and that there is something incongruous in giving it a formal close; and that, again, is not unconnected with the turn of the kaleidoscope from classic to romantic, which we all feel but cannot define.

So at last the article is written; and now . . . 'The Editor regrets.' Who that writes has not received those words? The foolish think they close a door of condemnation; the wise know they open a window of hope. Something was wrong, and we are not told what; it is our business to find out. We are not told, chiefly because no one can tell us without spending much time. It may have been merely that the subject was not wanted just then, or that another article on that subject had anticipated it. It is not necessary to fear the worst, that the English is bad or the tone vulgar. It has been said that every article can be summarised in a paragraph, and every paragraph condensed into a sentence; and it may well be that, in some way or other, this particular article did not hold enough to the square inch. But by far the commonest reason for the '*Kamschatka Evening News*' having rejected an article is that the writer evidently does not know Kamschatka, or what sort of evenings they have there, or what would be news to them; or—worst of all—has not himself been a constant reader of *THE KAMCHATKA EVENING NEWS*.

THE EDITOR.

## ANCIENT GREEK MUSIC: A SURVEY

Now that a new edition of *Grove's Dictionary* has appeared and an Introductory Volume been added to the *Oxford History of Music* it should be possible for the student of music, who has no time or inclination to master the original authorities, to find out by consulting these standard works of reference the present state of our ignorance about Greek music. Whoever thinks so will be grievously disappointed. In *Grove* Dr. Macran's article has been reprinted without alteration from earlier editions. To the *Oxford History* a chapter on Greek music was contributed by the late Mr. Cecil Torr, whose much regretted death occurred before he had corrected the proofs. Between the two accounts there is hardly a point in common of any importance. Nor would the main thesis of either writer be accepted by even a minority of scholars here or on the Continent. Is the situation then really so farcical? Is there no basis of fact to all the intolerable deal of theory? It is all the greater pity that such an impression is caused in that there has been a considerable revival of interest in the subject since the War. New fragments of some importance have been discovered and have been discussed by German, French and English scholars. An admirably concise handbook has been written by the late M. Th. Reinach.<sup>(1)</sup> In this country apart from Mr. Torr's chapter mentioned above, there have been articles by Prof. Mountford,<sup>(2)</sup> Mr. Clements,<sup>(3)</sup> Miss Schlesinger<sup>(4)</sup> and the present writer,<sup>(5)</sup> two thin booklets by Dr. Perrett.<sup>(6)</sup> Some of these contributions have been of very doubtful value, it is true; indeed perhaps the greatest light has been shed by one who is not a student of Greek music at all, as I hope to point out later. Fully to criticise these writings would need detailed argument which would be of little general musical interest. If what follows appears to be yet another theory about Greek music, my defence is that, while putting forward some hypotheses of my own,

(1) *La Musique Grecque*. Paris, 1926. Collection Payot.

(2) *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. Vol. 40. *Classical Quarterly*. Vol. 17.

(3) *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. Vol. 42.

(4) *Musical Standard*. Mar. 26, 1927, etc.; chapter on 'The Significance of Musical Instruments in the Evolution of Music' in *Oxford History of Music* Introductory Volume.

(5) *Classical Quarterly*. Vol. 22.

(6) *Some Questions of Musical Theory*. Heffer. Chaps. I and II, 1926. Chaps. III and IV, 1928.



I have endeavoured to make it clear what is fact and what is theory, what is generally agreed and what is highly controversial.

How much do we actually know about Greek music? What can we reasonably conjecture? The bulk of our knowledge is about the theoretical systems of scales, which are described in the extant treatises; but it will be best to begin by enumerating some of the general characteristics of Greek music.

(1) *Harmony*. Though Greek music was a highly developed art, our analogies to it must be drawn principally from folk music because of its mainly melodic character. How far a feeling for harmony went with them is a controversial point. We know they had no vocal polyphony, nor did harmony in our sense form part of the theory of *Harmonikê*. On the other hand the Greeks were certainly aware of both consonant and dissonant harmonic effects, and it is clear from some passages that at least consonant harmonies were used by accompanying instruments. Two of these passages actually suggest a second melodic part in counterpoint. However, the language is not clear and it remains doubtful whether this accompaniment amounted to more than the playing of an occasional note either with or after the note of the melody. None of the extant melodies show signs of a simultaneous accompaniment, though in some of them harmonic feeling seems to be shown in the melody; which is another matter.

(2) *Grace*. A common characteristic of purely melodic music is a frequent use of grace to embellish the melodic outline and establish tonality. There is little evidence that the Greeks cared much for grace. Some simple figures were analysed by late theorists and an increase of this kind of thing may have marked the decadence of the end of the fifth century. But in the main the Greeks liked a simple straightforward type of melody. This no doubt was due to their desire to prevent the music from obscuring the sense of the words in any way. The same instinct made them desire clear vocalisation. Aristoxenus and others open their treatises with an insistence on the difference between the employment of sound by speech and song in this respect.

(3) *Melody and the Pitch Accent*. The fact that they felt impelled to insist on that distinction is significant. There must have been a similarity to make them note the difference so carefully. The clue is given to us by the extant fragments. The spoken language had not a stress accent like ours but a pitch accent. Now it is noticeable that with few exceptions the Greek melodies we possess follow this pitch

accent according to some simple rules.<sup>(7)</sup> We are uncertain about the date of some of these melodies and so cannot be dogmatic about the history of this interesting relationship. But the Delphic Hymns (second century B.C.) follow these laws closely, the Hymns of Mesomedes (second century A.D.) break them fairly freely, which is only what would be expected seeing that the pitch accent began to give way early in the Christian era. The oldest of all the fragments, however, that from the *Orestes* of Euripides, breaks these laws, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus writing at the end of the first century B.C. quotes from the same score<sup>(8)</sup> to prove that they were not valid. This is probably to be explained by the fact that Euripides was an innovator. Perhaps he was here taking part in a movement to liberate music from the trammels of speech. We may, however, exaggerate the restriction that was in this way put upon the composer. The modern song writer attends closely to the natural values of the words and these variations in pitch were part of the natural values of the Greek words.

(4) *Rhythm*. As the melody was to a slight extent dictated by the accents, so was the rhythm to a much greater extent by the quantities. It is difficult at first to believe that this was so, yet there can be no doubt that when words were set to music the rhythm of the music was based upon the rhythm of the words. Were this not made virtually certain by the language of the Greek theorists, it would be established in my opinion by the remarkable results obtained by the late Walter Headlam<sup>(9)</sup> and by Mr. George Thomson, whose book on Greek lyric metre has just been published.<sup>(10)</sup> The variety and complexity of the metres of Pindar and the Greek tragic poets of themselves made the apparently humiliating position of music more easily explicable. It has now been shown that these writers employed something that might be described, if we do not press the comparison too far, as a kind of rhythmical counterpoint, and also constructed their stanzas and complete odes upon principles of form analogous to those of modern music. Not only does this make it certain that the melody could not have had yet another rhythm which obscured that

(7) (a) In any word an unaccented syllable cannot carry a note higher than that carried by the accented syllable and tends to carry a lower one; (b) when a syllable bearing the circumflex accent has two notes (as is frequent) the second of them must be lower than the first. For a further 'law' governing the grave-accented syllables and a full discussion see Prof. J. F. Mountford in *New Chapters in Greek Literature: Second Series* (Oxford, 1929).

(8) The date ascribed to the papyrus is the first century A.D. This coincidence is curious, and it is by no means improbable that this was the only score of the fifth century or earlier that had survived to that date.

(9) *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. Vol. 22. 'Greek Lyric Metres.'

(10) *Greek Lyric Metre*. Cambridge, 1929.

of the poetry but it largely removes any desire on our part to have had it so, if the Greeks were such musicians even before they came to the melody at all. For a full exposition of these results the reader must be referred to Headlam's article and Mr. Thomson's book.<sup>(11)</sup> A few words must suffice here.

The elements of Greek rhythm were a number of short and characteristic phrases. These were by the great artists intricately combined and patterned by various methods of transition. It would need a number of quotations to show how sometimes the natural divisions of the words inside one rhythmical phrase will give a hint at another, a suggestion that will later be taken up and developed effectively, how one phrase will be made to overlap another, or how—most subtly of all—two different rhythms will be made to run side by side in a kind of contrapuntal effect. Of this last device Mr. Thomson gives a fascinating example on p. 30 of his book from the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus (130-40). Here the repetition of a phrase of a common type (  $\cup - \cup - - \cup \cup -$  |  $\cup - \cup - - \cup \cup -$  ) creates an anacreontic, as underlined, and this double rhythm produces an undulating effect admirably appropriate to the subject, the flight through the air of the Ocean Nymphs on their winged sea-horses. Some of these devices at once remind us of the way a modern symphonic composer develops his melodies. To the formal principles of construction to be found in stanza and ode reference has already been made. There is yet another musical analogy in the use of the phrase as leit-motif in association with persons or subjects. In all these ways not only was an intricacy, challenging comparison with Hindu drum beating, given to the rhythm but a principle of coherence to the whole composition. We are told little or nothing of melodic form by the Greek writers and except for the second Delphic Hymn none of the fragments is both extensive and complete enough to illustrate its presence or absence. But this new approach to the subject has made Greek music intelligible to us in its form. The modern composer uses melody and harmony, the Greek composer used the element of pure time, but both to the same end and upon the same principles.

In its broader aspects we now know something about Greek rhythm. But we are far from being able to interpret it in detail. We can discuss phrases, but if we wish to discuss feet, let alone bars, we are in difficulties. Suppose we wish to write out an ode of Pindar in minims and crochets. Are we to assume that a long syllable is always worth two shorts? As it happens we know that in the time of Aristoxenus and later a long might be equal to three, four or even

(11) Also Prof. E. J. Dent's article on Headlam's theory in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 23, where he discusses it from the musician's point of view.

five shorts. How far were such prolongations used by Pindar and Aeschylus? Or were they only brought into fashion by the theorists and innovators of the later fifth and the fourth centuries? Some scholars hold that, as Professor Mountford puts it, 'the quantities of the words may have been merely the skeleton of the living rhythm.' But if that were so,<sup>(12)</sup> what of the beauties newly discovered upon Headlam's hypotheses? Any considerable distortion would obliterate them entirely. Granted that the poetic rhythm ruled, did this itself need anything, beyond the approximate equivalence of a long to two shorts, to make it intelligible? This brings us to the difficult question of feet, bars, ictus, and arsis and thesis, or metrical rise and fall. If the phrase was the effective unit, was it nevertheless itself subdivided? Are we to use bar lines?

The bar line to us implies at least a slight ictus on the first of the bar. Though this is not absolutely incompatible with an unstressed language, there are reasons for believing that ictus in Greek rhythm was either non-existent or slighter than that in the music to which we are most accustomed. But even if the suggestion of the bar line is misleading, we demand a proportion in rhythm. There must clearly be a rise and fall, marked by a psychological if not a physical ictus. The Greek theorists demanded proportion too, and discussed the arsis (fall) and thesis (rise)<sup>(13)</sup> of the foot.<sup>(14)</sup> In the simpler metres, which consist of a succession of similar feet, no difficulty arises. The more complicated present two types of difficulty. (a) One concerns the proportion between foot and foot when different feet, dactyls, say, and trochees, are combined in a phrase. It used to be thought necessary to adopt some theory for obtaining equidistance of stress, as in most modern music. Now it is being realised that these diverse feet probably represent what we should call change of time signature, a phenomenon easy enough even in strongly stressed rhythm like the English folk song. Five-time was common, and the well-known dochmiac metre, which appears in many forms (u - - u -, u u u - u -, etc.), is probably best explained as alter-

(12) Of the fragments that bear rhythmical signs only two show any considerable distortion of the verse rhythm; the Seikilos Epitaph, which is little more than doggerel, and the Berlin Pæan, which is an odd sort of poem, being written entirely in long syllables.

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(14) This proportion need not be mathematically exact. The voice is naturally flexible. Perhaps it would have been scarcely necessary for the Greeks to consider the subdivision of the phrase but for the problem of choral singing. Dr. Dyson says (*The New Music*, pp. 25-33) of a later music that the bar line was a device of discipline. So it may have been the exigencies of conducting that led the Greeks to consider the foot and its divisions.

nating bars of three- and five-time. (b) Secondly, it often happens that in the complicated variations of a choral ode the regular rise and fall appears to be broken. Sometimes there appears to be an agglomeration of rhythmical rises; sometimes in the linking of phrases the same syllable seems to be arsis in one phrase and thesis in another. It is doubtful whether we shall ever have a final explanation of these difficulties; for we have no means of deciding how far the Greeks of Pindar's time were prepared to use prolongations and pauses to produce an equidistance of rises or at least a fairly regular succession of rises and falls. It is not very important.

(5) *The Position of Music.* We have seen that words gave Greek music its rhythm and to a lesser extent its melodic outline. This would suggest that music was a purely ancillary art, whose sole duty it was to attend upon poetry as deftly and unobtrusively as possible. Yet against this we must put the high repute in which music was held by the Greeks, the regulations that the philosophers thought necessary to make for its control in their ideal states because of the effect on character they supposed the different modes to have.<sup>(15)</sup> Nor must it be supposed that there was no purely instrumental music.<sup>(16)</sup> No doubt choral lyric had the greatest prestige; but one of the oldest forms of Greek music was Auletikē (= αὐλητική), solo aulos playing. Its origins were associated with Asia, but early in the sixth century it was established at the Pythian games, and we know the names of many famous virtuoso auletes. Solo cithara playing came later. We see signs of a contest through Greek musical history, illustrated by a number of legends, between a conservative taste, loving a simple type of melody, which served the poetry and was particularly associated with the lyre, and a more elaborate, more emotional type of music, by origin Asiatic and associated with the flute. Of this contest we shall see more when we come to the modes.

In the later fifth century there seems to have been an important movement for the emancipation of music from poetry. The cithara became more elaborate and the composers of that day such as Phrynis and Timotheus were accused of spoiling the old dignified simplicity. As we have seen, there is reason to believe that Euripides revolted against the domination of melody by the pitch accent. There is also evidence for a corresponding revolution in rhythm. The resolved syllables in Euripides and his repetition of words as in a modern

(15) See in particular: Plato Rep. 398d-400c, Aristotle Pol. viii. 1339b-1342b.

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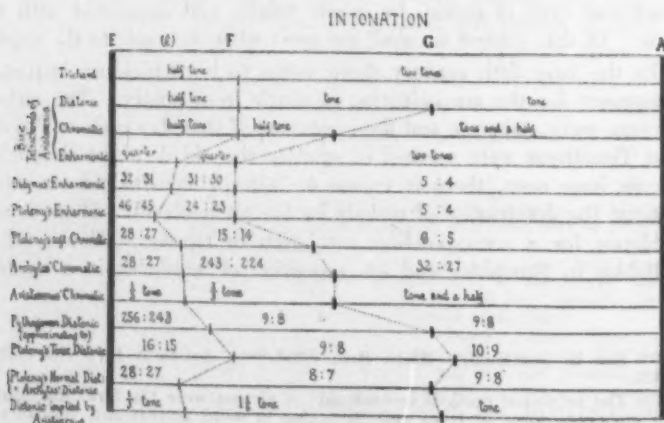
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anthem, the poor quality of Timotheus' extant poetry, which seems to be a mere congeries to fill up the rhythmical scheme, together with the parodies of Aristophanes and the complaints of critics all suggest that some change was going on. The general result seems to have been that the melody gained in importance at the expense of rhythm, which lost its old subtlety.

We cannot, of course, say whether this so-called decadence produced any first-rate music. There may have been too much self-conscious experiment, resulting in a sterility comparable to that of post-war Europe. There seems at any rate to have been in the music of this period an increase in an element of crude programme music that had not been known before. The music of Timotheus was accused of theatricality and may indeed have been as cheap as conservative critics made out.

*Melody; Diatonic, Chromatic, Enharmonic.* We can now come to Greek melody, about which we have a great deal of information, though mostly of a barren character. Before passing to the scales we must make a preliminary survey of the type of intervals used in them. For in mainly non-harmonic music subtleties of intonation are likely to be of considerable importance, and several recent English writers have advanced theories about the intervals. In every case, while their main contention has been more or less justified, the associated theories of the modes have been open to grave objections. Thus we can agree with Mr. Clements that the Greeks employed septimal intervals and kept the major and minor tones distinct, but not that on the order of major and minor tones



were based three fundamental 'harmonies,' as he calls them. We can agree with Dr. Perrett that the Greeks appreciated the small intervals they used and that their quarter-tones were no glissando, while rejecting his fantastic doublet enharmonic scale. Mr. Torr's theory about the intonation was based entirely on a false assumption about the keys and the nature of the notation. His eighth-tones had no existence except in his imagination.<sup>(17)</sup>

To return to the ancients, we may first put away from us any idea that they knew a tempered scale. It is true that the language of Aristoxenus suggests temperament, as for him six tones made an octave, two semitones a tone. However, this must have been merely an unscientific simplification for the sake of convenience. We must find the true meaning of his quarter-tones, third-tones, etc., from other sources. Fortunately the computations expressed in ratios of a number of Pythagorean mathematicians from Archytas (fourth century B.C.) to Ptolemy (second century A.D.) have been preserved by the latter. The Greeks described intervals by means of a typical tetrachord (say E F G A in the diatonic), in which the extreme notes stood firm, the two between moved within certain loci to give the variations of the genera (see Table I). Of these there were three: diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic, which can roughly be represented by the Aristoxenean successions: diatonic  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 1, 1, chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , enharmonic  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , 2. Of these the *enharmonic* would seem queerest to the modern ear, but its actual existence is undoubted and it attained a wide popularity. The thing that is most certain about it is the size of the interval F—A, the major third ( $5/4$ ). The three lower notes were quite possibly obtained from a single hole of the aulos. How this semitone was divided, whether in fact the two small intervals were not regarded as virtually equal, on this the mathematically minded may speculate with little check. Certainly Aristoxenus regarded them as equal; but the heyday of the enharmonic was over even in the fourth century, and when Ptolemy divided it  $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{3}{4}$  he did it for a mathematical consideration only; probably the ratios of Didymus ( $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{3}{4}$ ) more nearly represent the facts. The *chromatic* had for its upper interval the minor third ( $6/5$ ). It is uncertain what exact intonation Aristoxenus' equal semitones

(17) This is not the place to discuss Miss Schlesinger's view (*Oxford History, Introductory Volume*, pp. 86-9) of the importance in ancient music of a kind of natural polyphony caused by the interplay of harmonic overtones. If in her forthcoming book she succeeds in relating the modes to the higher partials, doubtless there will be more to be said. As it is, if this sensitiveness was in fact more than an appreciation of timbre, has this mechanical polyphony any more to do with music as a language for the expression of human emotion than bird-song or an Aeolian harp? And it is music as a language that we want to discover among the Greeks, not merely their sensuous pleasure in sound.

represent or whether the minor tone was ever divided approximately equally. However, on p. 52 (Meibom) he implies the sequence  $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{2}{3} + 1\frac{1}{2}$ ; the chromatic of Archytas is  $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{3}{4} \times \frac{4}{5}$ , the soft chromatic of Ptolemy is  $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{6}{5}$  (the two differ only in the disposition of a comma). So that it seems there was a variety of chromatic in which the middle interval was about double the lowest. In the *diatonic* the Pythagoreans used for their calculations a tetrachord with two major tones, and Ptolemy tells us that in his day this was actually undistinguished from the modern just intonation  $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{2}{3} \times \frac{1}{2}$ ; either may have been the standard diatonic of Aristoxenus. Ptolemy, however, regards as most normal the tuning  $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3}$ . These septimal intervals are also given by Archytas and implied by Aristoxenus ( $\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2} + 1$ , p. 27).<sup>(18)</sup> We shall not be far wrong in saying that the diatonic tetrachord consisted of two tones of variable size and a residual semitone, that the middle interval was normally the largest and frequently the septimal tone (8/7).

There are a number of other variations which have not been mentioned. We can only place reliance on those which are mutually supported, and it is remarkable the way that Archytas, Aristoxenus and Ptolemy confirm one another. Further hypotheses must be of an *a priori* nature. No doubt subtlety of ear varied from period to period and among the musicians of any one period.

We can now turn to the modes.

*The Modes.* In dealing with the modes we must begin with the system of Aristoxenus, but we must not stop there, as too many have done. It is now becoming recognised that this portentous scheme, tidy in all its parts, is too tidy by half; and, though our views of the early Greek modes must be in part determined by deductions from it, there is enough other evidence to guide us roughly along the right lines.

The system of Aristoxenus, which we know partly from his own writings and partly from those of his followers, is a vast inventory of the melodic resources of Greek music. It consists of thirteen keys, in pitch a semitone from one another (two more were added later). Each key (*tróvos*) was a scale two octaves in length, in its diatonic form as from A—a on the white notes of the piano. This could be analysed in two different ways. Most fundamental to Aristoxenus' system was the division into tetrachords. The core was the octave e—e, consisting of two tetrachords of the shape already described joined by the disjunctive tone—e—a—b—e . e—a above, B—e

<sup>(18)</sup> This and the chromatic above do not appear in his fallaciously symmetrical scheme of nuances. It is all the more significant that he should admit the validity of these intonations in an incidental fashion.



and a further tone below completed the double octave. In addition there was a supplementary tetrachord a—d, introducing the note b $\flat$  and in effect producing a modulation.<sup>(19)</sup> The whole was known as the Greater Perfect System. Each of these tetrachords (whose names appear on Table II, p. 337) could assume diatonic, chromatic or enharmonic forms. Notice the framework of 'standing notes' (A B e a b [d] e a).

Secondly, this two octave scale contained in itself the seven 'species of the octave' (*εἰδη τοῦ διὰ τασῶν*), which in the diatonic were the A mode, B mode, C mode, etc.

Where in this great edifice were the modes, the *ἀρμοῖαι* in which Alcman, Pindar and Sophocles wrote, of which Plato and Aristotle speak? The old modes had names derived from the tribes of Greece and Asia, Dorians, Lydians, Aeolians and the rest. These names or modified forms of them belong in Aristoxenus' system to the keys. But they are also given as obsolete names for the octave species (see Table II). Were either of these the old modes? Monro and Torr held that the *ἀρμοῖαι* were the keys; for Monro they differed only in pitch, for Torr they differed subtly in their intervals. There are weighty reasons for rejecting this view. Were they the octave species? This is the view held by Westphal, Gevaert and Reinach and in a modified fashion by Laloy and Mountford? On this theory the modes were true modes with distinctive characters of their own, and they have a clear relation to the tones of the Roman Church. Within limits this view is right. But perhaps it would be truer to say that the species of the octave are the sole representatives in the system of Aristoxenus of the old modes. Aristoxenus came at the end of more than a century of theoretical standardisation. There is evidence both internal and external that some of the realities of music had been squeezed out. There is the factitious nature of some of his scales; for instance, the enharmonic Lydic (B c e  $\acute{e}$  f a b  $\flat$ )<sup>(20)</sup> bounded by its quarter-tones. Again, while keeping the genera separate, he admits that the 'mixture of genera' needs studying. Externally, we can expose him from the extant fragments, since the 'Orestes' papyrus, the two Delphic Hymns, a piece in the Berlin papyrus, and perhaps the Hymn to the Muse contain notes which are out of place in their scales on the Aristoxenean analysis. Most important of all, however, are the old scales preserved by Aristides Quintilianus.

(19) The interplay of this tetrachord with the tetrachord *diezeugmenon* (see Table) is well illustrated in the Delphic Hymns.

(20) The adjectival forms of Doric, Lydic, Mixolydic, etc., are here adopted, although they are not those used for the modes by the Greeks, because this is likely to be less confusing to those who are accustomed to the nomenclature of the Church modes and whose Dorian is, therefore, a D mode, Mixolydian a G mode, etc. A dot over a note, e.g., B, indicates that it is raised by a quarter of a tone.—[Ed.]

These are of priceless value to us. For from them, from accounts of the old Spondeion scale given by Plutarch, from a few traditions and from assumptions as to what must have been to produce the system of Aristoxenus we must deduce what is possible about the early music of Greece.

The history of Greek music is that of two confluent streams, the Hellenic and the Asiatic. The two fought for the mastery and in theory at least the victory went to the Hellenic. To this stream we can ascribe the all important tetrachord with its smallest interval lowest and also in all probability the diatonic genus; for in one of the few glimpses we are given of the folk music of Greece we hear of Aetolians using the diatonic. Indeed a diatonic tetrachord may well have been the most primitive thing in Greek music, in which case it would find an interesting parallel in the Saman chant.<sup>(21)</sup> More developed forms of which we can be fairly certain are the heptachord of firm tradition ( $e f g a b \bar{b} c d$ ), which left its mark in the supplementary tetrachord of the Greater Perfect System, and the octave  $e - \bar{e}$ , the undoubted Doric mode in its diatonic form and, as we have seen, the very kernel of Aristoxenus' system. With the attainment of this octave tradition associates the name of Terpander (seventh century). Perhaps also the addition of a tone below the heptachord may have given the Aeolic from  $d - \bar{d}$ , though the early form of this mode is more doubtful.

Asiatic influence is symbolised by references to a legendary musician, Olympus. With him are associated the Phrygic and the Lydic, which latter he is said to have invented, and—in close and important connection—the Spondeion scale and the origin of the enharmonic genus. Of the Spondeion we can trace the following history from accounts in Plutarch and hints in the Aristotelian Problems.<sup>(22)</sup> First, the pure Spondeion, a scale of the form  $e \bar{f} a b c$ , in which the small intervals were three-quarter-tones (12/11). It developed in various ways; the lowest interval, whether then semitone or still three-quarter-tone, was divided into two small intervals; later the upper semitone was divided also; before or after this the octave  $e$  was added. Note the result obtained:  $e \bar{e} f a b \bar{b} c \bar{e}$ .

Here follows a list of the scales of Aristides. With them and the scales already mentioned and the octave species of the theorists in the three genera we shall have all the cards upon the table.

Doric:  $d e \bar{e} f a b \bar{b} c \bar{e}$  [Syntono] lydic:  $e \bar{e} f a c$  Mixolydic:  $B \bar{B} c d e \bar{e} f b$   
Phrygic:  $d e \bar{e} f a b \bar{b} c \bar{d}$  Ionic:  $e \bar{e} f a c \bar{d}$  [(Hypo) lydic:  $e \bar{e} f a b \bar{b} c \bar{e} \bar{e}$ ] (23)

(21) A. H. Fox Strangways' *Music of Hindustan*, p. 277.

(22) This question is treated in detail in my article 'The Spondeion Scale,' to which reference has already been made.

(23) This scale is bracketed as probably spurious.

SCALES AND MODES

		<div> <div>netôn</div> <div>synemmenôn</div> <div>a a' b' c d</div> </div>																	
"Complete system"		A	B	B̄	c	d	e	f	g	a	b	b̄	c	d	e	f	g	a	
Modes		hypatôn			mesôn			diezeugmenôn			hyperbolatôn								
Diatonic	Doric				c	f	g	a	b	e	d	e							
	Heptachord				c	f	g	a	b̄	e	d								
	Pure Spondeion				c	f		a	b	e									
Scales of Aristides	Doric				d	e	f	a	b	b̄	e	e							
	Phrygic				d	e	f	a	b	b̄	e	d							
	(Syntonolydic)				e	e	f	a			e	d							
	Ionic				e	e	f	a			e	d							
	Mixolydic	B	B̄	c	d	e	f		b										
	(Chalazydic)				e	f		a	b	b̄	e	e	e					(probably spurious)	
octave species diatonic	Mixolydic	B			e	d	e	f	g	a	b								
	Lydic				c	d	e	f	g	a	b	e							
	Phrygic				d	e		f	g	a	b	e	d						
	Doric				e			f	g	a	b	e	d	e					
	Hypolydic							f	g	a	b	e	d	e				f	
	Hypophrygic								g	a	b	e	d	e				f	
	Hypodoric								a	b	e	d	e				f		
octave species enharmonic	Lydic	B	c		e	e	f		a	b	b̄								
	Phrygic		c		e	e	f		a	b	b̄	e							
	Doric				e	e	f		a	b	b̄	e	e						
	etc., etc.																		

These were, says Aristides, the modes to which Plato refers, and there is little reason to doubt that they are examples of the pre-Aristoxenean modes. We may notice several points.

(1) The compass of the Syntonolydic is the same as that of the Spondeion and both are associated with Olympus. These scales have little yet in common with the formalised octaves of later days.

(2) We are told that the semitone was not divided in the early Spondeion, that it was first divided in the Phrygic and Lydic. Whatever the history, we may take it that this type of scale, in which an interval of the major third had below it two small intervals

completing the fourth, was characteristic of the Asiatic contribution to Greek music.

(3) We are expressly told that Doric melodies of the primitive Spondeiac type (we shall see that in retrospect the Spondeion became Doric) did not employ the note *d* below this tetrachord. The scales of Aristides show us why this piece of information was necessary. In Doric, Phrygic and Mixolydic scales this 'diatonic' note appears below the 'enharmonic' tetrachord. Reference to the Orestes fragment and to the second Delphic Hymn shows us that not only in the fifth but even in the second century B.C. this mixture of genera was an element in Greek music.

(4) Aristides unfortunately gives only those modes which Plato mentions. This accounts for the omissions and for the name Syntonolydic. This is the same as the primordial Lydic of Olympus, which with the Doric and Phrygic is by tradition oldest of all. There was another and later Lydic, the 'low' or 'slack' Lydic of Plato. Similarly there were in all probability two Ionics, one the 'slack' Ionic of Aristides, another which eventually developed into the Hypophrygic species, though some would deny this. The Aeolic unfortunately does not appear in the list and it is not clear whether we should account for it as above. Both the 'slack' Lydic and the Mixolydic were regarded as having been invented about the turn of the seventh and sixth centuries. The latter must have got its name from a mixture of Doric and Lydic characteristics.

On the one side, Hellenic music, with a fixed structure of tetrachords and probably diatonic. On the other, modes of diverse form with an enharmonic element and not directly comparable with the Hellenic Doric. Two questions arise. How far was the one subordinated to the other? And how? To the first we can answer: In theory, completely; in practice, who knows? To answer the second we can put forward a number of conjectures. Here is a curious phenomenon to be accounted for and these ideas are advanced quite tentatively in the hope that they will partly do so. Of course, broadly speaking, if the modal dialects of Asia were drilled into an Hellenic shape, it was because of a natural tendency of the Greek to prefer a certain form of musical expression. This is the fundamental musical reason. But we can suggest contributory causes.

(1) The Spondeion scale is associated with Olympus, but of all those in the Asiatic tradition it is most easily comparable to the Hellenic strain. Not only in form does it fit the lower part of the diatonic Doric, but it was associated apparently with a sober and dignified style that gained it great prestige. When the semitones were divided and the upper *E* added, it was in form the enharmonic Doric of the Aristoxeneans. Thus the Spondeion acted as a link.

(2) At what point this developed Spondeion could have been regarded as an enharmonic Doric is not clear. Compare the lower half of the Lydic of Aristides with a diatonic tetrachord. It is clear that the *g* is missing and the *e*—*f* interval made into two. But when the chromatic had come into use (very possibly at first it was an attempt to imitate the enharmonic intervals on stringed instruments) another way of regarding the matter sprang up. *e è f a*, *e f f# a*, *e f g a*, are all comparable tetrachords; the third note varies in the locus *f*—*g*; *e* and *a* are standing notes; a fether has been forged to clamp the Asiatic modes to the Hellenic framework. From this point the Doric could adopt the enharmonic form practically provided for it in the developed Spondeion; similarly, we can postulate a diatonic Lydic or Phrygic.

(3) To the pleasure found in the Doric mode in practice a theoretical prestige was added by the mathematical doctrines of Pythagoras. By showing that the formula 6—8—9—12 gave the notes *e*—*a*—*b*—*c* he evidently impressed the Greek mind greatly and helped to fix the Doric octave—two tetrachords joined by the disjunctive tone—in the centre of Greek musical theory.

(4) There is reason to believe that as musical instruments developed they became capable of rendering combinations of modes. This was effected by the addition of holes and devices to the *aulos* and of strings to the *cithara*. In this way the idea of a continuous inclusive scale was fostered.

The actual details of the process are quite obscure. Clearly the Phrygic was seen to fit into place below the Doric. The Syntonolydic of Aristides by the addition of the lower *e* would come below that; the Mixolydic fitted into the B octave. At some point in the process B—*e* would be thought of as a new tetrachord (*hypatōn*). In the other direction it was the old 'slack' Lydic that became the F octave (*Hypolydic*), the lost 'tense' Ionic that became the G octave (*Hypophrygic*); the A octave (*Hypodoric*) was the developed form of the Aeolic; *e*—*a* became the tetrachord '*netōn*.' The historical order of this process is quite unknown and whether there were long stopping-places on the way. Nor can we say what combinations were practical and what theoretical or how far a sorting out of the genera accompanied it. However, some such development must have gone on, until the labours of numerous fifth and fourth century theorists culminated in the system of Aristoxenus.

The keys came into being as pure pitch keys and got their names from that species of the octave that they brought into the middle range of the voice. Their very existence implies a standardisation of mode. How far was this standardisation effective in practical music?



before we can attempt to judge this issue, three tasks await us, to examine the conception of *Ethos*, to consider the evidence about tonality, and to review the surviving remains of Greek melody.

*Ethos*. A large amount of the interest taken in Greek music is undoubtedly due to the well-known pronouncements of the philosophers about its moral value. It is a curious idea to us that a musical mode could affect the character. To judge by the music of other nations it is even curious that a specific character (*ἦθος* in Greek, as 'character' in English, has this double sense) should be associated with a mode or scale rather than with a complete style. But there are many things to modify the impression we get from Plato and Aristotle.<sup>(24)</sup> This ethical view of music was put forward by Damon, an important figure of the middle of the fifth century, from whom it was adopted by Plato; but it was not allowed to pass without protest even among the ancients. These contentions are vigorously opposed by an anonymous writer, probably of the fourth century B.C., and by Philodemus of Gadara in the first. More important still is the attitude of the musicians to this doctrine of the philosophers. Aristoxenus, as the pupil of Aristotle, did not like to deny it outright, but he qualifies the statement that music may hurt or improve character with the significant addition 'in so far as musical art can improve moral character'; and, when we come to his own discussion of 'ethos,' we find that it is a matter not of the absolute moral value of certain modes but of the appropriateness of a combination of mode, genus and rhythm to the treatment of a given subject.<sup>(25)</sup> Again, his followers do not classify modes, they classify styles.<sup>(26)</sup> Allowing for a large conventional element, which assigned certain modes to certain subjects, as convention dealt also with rhythms upon Headlam's and Thomson's theory, there were a number of subsidiary associations, which led to this view of the modes: a characteristic and simple style associated with the Doric; the association of the Phrygic with the low-pitched Asiatic aulos, to whose exciting effect there is testimony;

(24) Aristotle may have been a musician but Plato's knowledge was probably limited to the mathematics of the subject. There is a revealing passage in the *Laws* (699 D-E), in which he admits that without the words he cannot understand what the rhythms and modes mean!

(25) Aristox. *Harm.*, p. 31, and ap. Plutarch. *de Mus.* §357, etc. (ed. Weil and Reinach).

(26) It is true that Ptolemy uses language to suggest that *ethos* depended upon the succession of notes, but it is vague language and he appears to be searching after a description of modality that is beyond his vocabulary.

the association of the Syntonolydic with a high pitch<sup>(27)</sup> suitable to lamentation. We may doubt if it was ever purely the succession of notes in the scale that determined the ethos. As for the morals of music, that we can leave to the philosophers—which is no doubt what the Greek musicians did.

*Tonality.* We could discuss the justice of associating emotional characters with modes better if we knew what was their tonality and their characteristic melodic idiom. Clearly it is little use to know the succession of notes in a scale, unless we also know something of its internal hierarchy. We may guess that in the Mixolydic of Aristides conjunct movement among the close packed lower notes was varied with leaps to the upper b, or that the Syntonolydic melody was based on the fifth, f—c. But there are only two things that could have given us definite information—a clear statement in ancient theory or a large collection of reliable remains. Neither of these do we possess.

There is no theory of tonality. There are only a few passages, notably two in the Aristotelian Problems (probably third century B.C.), which attribute a kind of tonal importance to the note 'Mesē.' Mesē is the note a in the middle of the Greater Perfect System according to the nomenclature most commonly used, but there was also another that made it the note fourth from the bottom in any of the octave species. Westphal once held but later abandoned the view that Mesē in the latter sense was tonic in all the modes; Gevaert held a modified form of it. But it is in fact clear that the writers were using the other nomenclature throughout their work. Dr. Macran put forward the perfectly plausible suggestion that in all the modes the same note (a) of the Perfect System was tonic and that their characteristic effects came from its position high or low in the modal octave. This, however, is not in the least borne out by the surviving fragments. It might seem arbitrary to limit the application of these pronouncements to the Doric and leave the question of the other modes open. It becomes less so when we notice that the actual language of Prob. xix 20 refers to the frequent use of the Mesē in 'all good melodies' and remember that the Doric was the only mode to which Aristotle gave full approval. What if the pupil has elevated the master's praise into a general principle of tonality? At least it is certain that the note a was tonic in the Doric E mode.

(27) Whether the old modes differed importantly in pitch is difficult to determine. The Syntonolydic is by tradition high, the Phrygic on its native instrument was low, the Doric very probably of medium pitch. But the Greeks must have been prepared to abandon these distinctions, if, as they apparently did, they played the different modes on the same lyre retuned.

*Fragments.* In passing to the fragments I should like to call attention to Prof. Mountford's scholarly editing of the latest discoveries in *New Chapters in Greek Literature*. This is now one of the most attractive and accessible editions, and, although a few of his interpretations may be questioned, the scholarship that has produced the transcriptions is absolutely reliable.<sup>(28)</sup>

I shall tabulate these fragments and state very briefly the contribution each makes to our knowledge.

*The Orestes Fragment.* Almost certainly this is part of a Euripidean score, but it is very brief and badly mutilated. It is impossible to dogmatise about its mode or tonality. Its importance lies in the fact that it is one of the *old modes*. Its succession of intervals ( $1 \frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} 2 1 \frac{1}{4}$ ) forms part of both the Doric and Phrygic of Aristides.

*First Delphic Hymn.* The date is probably late second century B.C. (a) The first section of some 30 bars is interesting as showing that the style of the old Spondeion still survived, with its trichords instead of tetrachords. Despite a few gaps, we can appreciate this as a well turned interesting melody. Transcribed in three flats the tonic is clearly *c*. Doubtless this is the Doric mode; the cadence on *g* may be regular. (b) The second section introduces a note alien to the Aristoxenean key in which it is written. By this means a succession of three semitones is produced. This chromatic effect is used to describe the rich savour of sacrifice and the music of pipe and lyre. *c* may still be the tonic, though the section ends on *b $\flat$* , the anomalous note.

*Second Delphic Hymn.* The date is 128-7 B.C. There are changes of key and style forming a pattern A B C B C B A. This gives a musical form to compensate for the monotony of the rhythm. *Style A* is pure Spondeion except that the second piece uses and the first may use (neither are complete) the note below the old Spondeion (*g* in one flat), which we saw to be characteristic of the old modes. Also, the tetrachord *synemmenōn* is used for contrast, but still 'trichordally.' *d* is tonic and the cadences are on *a*. *Style C* is based on the old heptachord; the lower tetrachord is here chromatic; below it appears the diatonic *g*. There seems to have been a tendency to employ chromatic or enharmonic in the lower tetrachord only, witness the history of the Spondeion and a remark of Ptolemy's. The

(28) Mountford gives in musical score the Orestes fragment, the Aidin Inscription (or Epitaph of Seikilos), the Berlin fragments and the Christian Hymn. Von Jan (*Musici Scriptores Graeci*, Supplement. Teubner.) gives all the fragments but the last two. Reinach's *La Musique Grecque* has them all and except for a few details is quite reliable. The Delphic Hymns may be found also in *Collectanea Alexandrina*, ed. J. U. Powell (Oxford).

subject in either case is appropriate to the Greek idea of the chromatic. The two final cadences are lost. *Style B* is characterised by leaps of an octave from  $\bar{e}$  to  $\bar{e}$  (natural key) and by melodic figures (e.g.,  $\bar{d} \bar{e} \bar{f} \bar{e}$ ) emphasising  $\bar{e}$ . It is similar in this respect to the mutilated end of the First Hymn.  $\bar{e}$  appears to be tonic. In general we may say that in these Hymns, while it is very difficult to ascribe modes, or species of the octave, the tetrachordal structure of 'standing notes' is always clear. Is this typical Dorized Aristoxenean music (barring the anomalies noted)?

*The Epitaph of Seikilos.* An inscription of uncertain date. Its four lines are complete and the rhythmical interpretation fairly clear. The scale employed is the diatonic octave from  $\bar{e}$  to  $\bar{e}$  (in two sharps). The tonic seems to be  $\bar{a}$ ; the cadence is  $\bar{a} \bar{f} \bar{e}$ . This piece is the chief argument for those who hold that the species of the octave were the real basis of Greek music. For them this is Phrygic (the D mode) with its tonic in the same relative position as that of the Doric.

*The Hymn to the Muse.* The date is uncertain; also whether this is two pieces or one. In any case the style is homogeneous. Barring one note of doubtful interpretation, which may introduce an anomalous chromatic, the melody is diatonic and lies mainly between  $\bar{e}$  and  $\bar{e}$  (in one flat: i.e., the (Mixolydic) B mode).  $\bar{a}$  appears to be tonic.

*The Hymns of Mesomedes.* Second century A.D. These are somewhat dull and formless melodies. The Hymn to the Sun has a diatonic compass  $\bar{g}$  to  $\bar{f}$  (in one flat); the notes of melodic importance appear to be  $\bar{a}$  and  $\bar{e}$ , of which the former is probably tonic. The Hymn to Nemesis is written in the diatonic octave  $\bar{g}$  to  $\bar{g}$  (D species), plus the note  $\bar{f}$ , and as  $\bar{c}$  is apparently tonic it recalls the Phrygic modality of the Seikilos Epitaph.

*The Berlin Fragments.* This papyrus contains fragments, vocal and instrumental, of what appears to have been an anthology of melodies. The pieces were composed at uncertain dates, probably before the third century A.D. (A), which is part of a Pæan, and (B), which is instrumental, are purely diatonic. They are so badly cut up that the ascription of tonic and mode is too risky. There is no sign of tetrachordal structure as in the Delphic Hymns. They appear more similar to the Epitaph and the Hymn to Nemesis. (C) may be a fragment from some tragic lament. The mode is obscure, but the surviving scale is interesting ( $\bar{b} \bar{c} \bar{\sharp} \bar{d} \bar{e} \bar{\sharp} \bar{f} \bar{\sharp}$ ), as it can be compared with the Byzantine chromatic. (D) is so hard to interpret rhythmically that one cannot venture to discuss tonality.

*The Christian Hymn* (not later than the third century A.D.) is

diatonic and written in the  $g-g$  octave (Hypophrygic) *plus* the note  $f$ .  $c$  appears to be tonic.

We can now take stock of the position. Our earliest fragment shows Euripides using one of the old *ἀρμονίαι*, but which and how we cannot say. The Delphic Hymns illustrate the simple style of the old Spondeion and the theoretical analysis of Aristoxenus. Apart from these and portion (C) of the Berlin Papyrus we have a number of diatonic melodies, sometimes within and sometimes over the compass of an octave. The tonic is fairly clear in a number of cases, and we get a distinct suggestion that the Phrygic (D), Hypophrygic (G) and Mixolydic (B) diatonic octaves had their tonics fourth from the bottom like the Doric. What is their relation (1) to the old modes; (2) to the system of Aristoxenus; and (3) to the system of Ptolemy and the early Church music?

(1) Because we find in the Seikilos Epitaph a Phrygic  $d$  species with a tonic  $g$ , can we take it that this was of the essence of the wild Phrygic of Euripides' choruses? The indications are against it. The Phrygic of Aristides does not in fact possess this note  $g$  at all. This Phrygic octave species is used in a graceful epitaph, a highly conventional hymn and possibly in a Paean! The Mixolydic species is employed as no mode of lamentation.

(2) We have asked how far the system of Aristoxenus really meant a standardisation of mode; and we have seen that the Delphic Hymns, while containing anomalous elements, on the whole might have been written to illustrate his works. Further, the very existence of his keys implies this standardisation. Ptolemy, writing in the second century A.D., quarrelled with the Aristoxeneans for using this word (*τόνος*)—and the old modal names—for pure pitch keys. His own *τόνοι* were in effect the seven species of the octave extended into the seven species of the double-octave. But the octave species were in the system of Aristoxenus also. Where was the centre of gravity? Did these octave species, if they were practical music, look forward or backward in their tonality? How can we apply the same principles of tonality to his enharmonic as to his diatonic octaves?

(3) This brings us to an important fact in the history of Greek music. The scales of Aristides represent the height of the enharmonic period. This genus had lost favour by the time of Aristoxenus, but the chromatic was still popular. By the time of Ptolemy the diatonic was supreme; for the only variety of chromatic he recognises is little more than a kind of diatonic, and was so thought of by Aristoxenus. We have seen that it was in the nature of the enharmonic and



chromatic to emphasise a certain shape or framework of scale. With their disappearance there became possible for the first time in practical music a neat system of octave modes, complete with tonics and perhaps finals, and comparable to the modes of the Roman Church. Perhaps it may ultimately prove more profitable to discuss the surviving melodies of the Greco-Roman period with reference to the future rather than to look to those melodies to throw light on the music of Pindar and Sophocles.

Everywhere we are faced with unanswered questions. It is an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and the reader will naturally want to know what hope there is that it will be improved. The scholar wishes primarily to interpret the writings of the ancients. He may reasonably expect by careful study to eliminate apparent contradictions and form hypotheses which will give an intelligible history of Greek musical theory. The secondary concern of the scholar and the only desire of the musician is to understand Greek music as an art. But this would need a large number of actual melodies of all periods, unmutated and definitely dated. Further fragments are likely to turn up, but there is little hope that they will be in better preservation than those we possess or that they will date back to that early period about which we are naturally most curious.

R. P. WINNINGTON-INGRAM.

## VOCAL AND UNVOCAL

*The terms of reference for these articles were printed in the July number, with articles by Dr. Bairstow, Prof. Dent, Dr. Walker, Mr. Stewart Wilson, Mr. Paul England, Mr. Gregory Hast and Mr. Owen Colyer. Below appear others by Mr. Plunket Greene, Mr. Walter Ford and Mr. Kennedy Scott. In January others will follow by Mr. Harvey Grace, Mr. Dawson Freer and Dr. Aikin.*

DR. BAIRSTOW, as usual, gets to the heart of things. 'Song is easiest when it most resembles speech . . . difficulties begin when song departs from the habits of speech.'

On these two hang all the law and the prophets. To say that difficulties can be surmounted by practice is an obvious truth, but it begs the very question itself. To be vocal, song should be easy to sing. It should be so easy to sing that the singer is unembarrassed by problems which keep him on the defensive, his mind continually alert to tackle technical difficulties which have no direct bearing on the sense of the words or the imaginative side of his song.

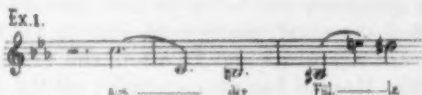
Florid singing is a case in point. Except in the case of the melismata and a few rare instances (in Purcell and Haydn, perhaps), and in bird songs, and Pan-pipes or the like, florid passages are about as much use to the singer of imagination as a Scotch burn to a Channel swimmer. What has 'Caro nome' to do with the world in general? Does it express any emotion that you can give a name to? Does it paint a picture or give your intelligence a lead? Does it get the action any 'forrarder'? Do you sit up or sit back when you hear it? Do you love the singer's mind or admire her art? You could never admire it enough. The human voice—*quâ* florid instrument—is the most plausible, glittering, empty string of beads that ever worked off the confidence trick with a rosary. I take off my hat in admiration to the successful perpetrators of that time honoured old fraud, but I do not associate their rosary with religion any more than her florid song with my immortal soul.

But the voice—*quâ* instrument—deserves our pity too. Take it away from its partner in life—speech, and it gropes like a blinded man left suddenly alone; it mourns like *Œnone* bereft of Paris; it cowers, in a nightmare, naked in a ball-room. It is, truth to tell, the most inefficient instrument—*quâ* instrument—in the world. Its very gifts are its undoing. Its resonators, unlike those fashioned by the hand of man, are variable in their capacity, and, as such, at the mercy of the imagination and a

constant prey to panic. Not only this, but all the other components and ingredients of its technique are emotional from beginning to end. Architecture, phrasing, line, colour, texture, declamation, and all the rest follow the surge of the breath, and the surge of the breath follows the surge of the mood and the mood is but the surge of the literary text on the 'foaming billows' and 'limpid streams' of music.

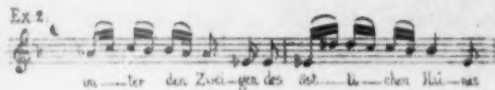
It is only a quarter-truth to say that 'vocality' varies with the period. It simply means that the florid singers of old days chose to spend ten years learning to do unvocal things, *i.e.*, to sing instrumentally. It was not their fault; it was the fault of the period. Imagination had not yet entered their lives. Ten years of sheer hard work to bend an unwilling voice to their will—poor piping bullfinches so near and yet so far from trees, and nests and children, getting nowhere, begetting nothing! There were some then, as there are to-day, to whom such things present no difficulty; but in the main it was a heart-breaking process; only the fittest survived, and, deservedly, made history.

It is begging the question to claim that because a thing can be achieved either suddenly by genius or at long length by hard labour it therefore is easy. No amount of genius or hard work could ever make the diminished twelfth in the Brahms' alto-rhapsody sound vocal:—



I once heard of a man who could make a standing jump on to the top of a chest of drawers, but I doubt if it could become a habit with the rest of us; we have laboriously learnt to fly, but we can hardly call the air our habitat. Some day, perhaps, a super-contralto will ascend with the grace of a rocket from the low A<sub>2</sub>, poise for a moment on a nimbus on E<sub>2</sub>, and return to earth in step with her rhythm; but if ever such a one makes good she will do it by her genius in spite of the music.

The human throat was the same in Brahms's time as in Bellini's or Sullivan's and just as rebellious at being mishandled. Even Schubert, mastersinger as he was, often forgot the instrumental limitations of the voice. Such a passage as the following from 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen'



is surprisingly difficult to sing. In order to hold their own with, and not suffer in comparison with, the pianoforte part in what is undoubtedly a pianoforte song the smooth semiquaver passages must be sung as though they were played with one's fingers; and to keep the resonators uniformly open while singing with a 'touch' and at the same time moving forward with a dancing rhythm demands considerable skill, handicapped rather than otherwise by the emotional surge of the music. He often lands us in this particular difficulty, as in 'Mein!' or 'Pause,' which, whether he will or no, divert the singer's mind from his interpretation to his technique. Schumann, on the other hand, was so enamoured of his words that he instinctively put them first and, in consequence, his songs are blissfully easy to sing. The same was the case later on with Parry and Stanford and with most of our present day Englishmen who love poetry and know how beautiful words can be when you leave them in peace.

The florid and quasi-florid arias of Bach would appear at first sight to be the most unvocal of them all, and with those who do not know the secret the performance is generally a breathless chase after the music. But in nine cases out of ten he has given us a bass foundation—on the principle, generally of eight definite beats in the common-time bar—which supports the whole rhythmical structure and brings perfect order out of apparent chaos. If the singer of 'Laudamus Te' from the Mass in B minor will listen earnestly to the simple bass of the opening symphony and follow its lead throughout the aria, she will not only find the rough places made smooth for her, but will be inspired to spread her wings and fly where she will in the sheer joy of rhythm. But Heaven has no monopoly; all the saxophones and kitchen utensils would be rhythmless without the banjo foundation.

Phrasings in which words and music do not fit are rare amongst us and when they occur are more annoying than unvocal—annoying because, when they 'swear,' preference must always be given to the musical phrase for rhythm's sake and one's literary sense is apt to get bruised in the transference. What you lose on the roundabouts you gain on the swings.

Awkward vowels on high notes for women's and men's voices accommodate themselves by compromise—opening in one case and covering in the other—and have become acceptable to our ears by long association; there is nothing unvocal about them. Queer harmonies and unusual intervals are awkward in that, like the Schubert passages quoted above, they switch the singer's mind from what he is saying to 'the nasty way he says it.' Ravel's 'Martin-pêcheur,' for instance, demands so much alertness on the part of the average singer that he cannot hand it to his audience unconcernedly.

It is saved by being written in quasi-recitative form. It is not so much unvocal as difficult to make sound spontaneous.

There are some things, infinitesimally small in themselves, which yet affect delivery vocally or unvocally. The opening words of Henry Ley's lovely setting of Fletcher's 'Drop, drop, slow tears' are, on paper, perfect in their expression; but the actual articulation of the initial *d* and final *p* take so long that there is no time for the vowel to give us the beauty of sound and colour which throb in the word without stopping the forward pulse of the rhythm. On the other hand, the word 'drips' in Stanford's 'A soft day' (Winifred Letts) actually gains by it onomatopœically. You can see and hear slow raindrops gather and fall, but slow tears are secret things. I am certain that neither composer had any knowledge of either in his mind; no more had I till I came to try them.

'Vocal and unvocal' comes to this: Are you a man or a robot? Is your voice a mechanical instrument or the mouthpiece of the emotions which have opened your heart to your fellows all your life? 'Der Leiermann,' 'der Erbkönig' and 'Das Wirthshaus' are child's play when you can do them as 'carelessly' (to quote Percy Buck) as speech. But Heaven help the poor fighter who enters the ring against Tom Sayers the flute, or Peter Jackson the clarinet, or Jack Dempsey the trombone!

H. PLUNKET GREENE.

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THE articles which have appeared on this subject must be welcome to all who are interested in singing and in song. It needed ventilation, for, as far as I know, there is no serious treatment of it, except in the masterly chapter on vocal music in Stanford's 'Composition.' Moreover, since that chapter was written, new problems and new conditions have arisen. Allowance being made for different points of view, it is remarkable how little there is in these articles that implies real divergence of opinion. One aspect of the subject, however, though implicit in the questionnaire and in several of the articles themselves, does not seem to me to have been emphasised as much as its importance deserves, I mean the consequences of unvocality to the voice itself.

It is good to have the causes of it rubbed in, and also to be reminded that they must not be treated pedantically, owing to the incalculable element of personality; that much music, which used to be reviled as unvocal, has proved in the light of experience to be merely difficult, and that music may often seem unvocal because singers are too



apathetic or too unintelligent to enter into its spirit, or, as Dr. Bairstow has trenchantly put it, 'They are always endeavouring to sing white-hot music in the cold blood of conversational speech.'

But even when the detailed points—*tessitura*, awkward intervals, uncomfortable harmony, and so on, which make for unvocality have been enumerated, there still remains behind them all, overshadowing them all, something mysterious and inexplicable, some knowledge not gained from books or articles, but divined by intuition. The truly vocal composers—Dowland, Schubert, Gounod, Sullivan—had *the singing instinct*; they composed and felt vocally; they could not help it; they could not outrage that instinct, for they were, or had been in youth, singers. This is why their music is always, not accidentally, grateful to the ear and good for the voices that sing it. Of Handel, Mendelssohn, Stanford and many others, not blessed, as far as I know, with voices, it is clear that they had the singing instinct too, or that they divined its secrets through sympathy with and understanding of the singer's needs. Unvocal music comes from composers who are without that instinct and without sympathy with voices or singers. As they cannot, will not, or do not think and feel vocally, their songs are not grateful to the ear and, if taken in sufficient quantity, not good for the voices that sing them. Once when I ventured to congratulate the late Charles Wood on the vocal quality of his part songs and their effectiveness in performance, he remarked 'They *ought* to come off, for I sing through every part and if it is not vocal, I alter it.'

The question of words and the part which they play in song opens a larger field for discussion at present than any other. It is obviously impracticable to discuss it properly here, but I will put down some of the thoughts that occurred to me as I read the July articles.

From the logical standpoint words, which imply consonants, cannot be called, except in part, vocal, for vocalising can only take place on vowels; consonants are to vowels obstructions or interruptions; in themselves they have no æsthetic value; in fact, they are positively disagreeable. If one whispers a few sentences, emphasising the consonants, the result is the horrid sound of hissing and exploding breath. The beauty of a language lies in its vowel sounds. Those languages in which these prevail—Italian and French for instance—are admittedly the most beautiful and the most vocal. On the other hand, consonants give to words their character and significance. Some nations, the German, the Dutch, the English, for example, find more forcefulness of expression in masses of consonants than in the beauty and sonority of vowels. Words, moreover, have gathered associations all their lives, through use in ordinary social intercourse and more particularly in the works of poets and dramatists.

They have thus acquired a subtle beauty of their own, the nature of which it is not easy to determine; they owe it probably more to their meaning than their sound, and appeal therefore more to the literary than to the æsthetic sense. We can thus easily understand that those singers who are sensitive to the beauties of poetry, find in the words of the best songs a vocal stimulus second only to that which they find in the music. But I cannot go so far as Dr. Bairstow, who tells us that the artistic singer 'makes the poetry, not the music, the first consideration.' The statement is too reminiscent of Wagner's famous remark at a Bayreuth rehearsal: 'We don't want any singing here.' Without taking Wagner's words too literally, he clearly meant that the declamation of his poems was to be effective, whatever the cost. The cost proved to be the battered voices of many of those who performed his operas in the early days and who first reconciled the public ear to accept singing which was frequently out of tune. We know now that the greater part of Wagner's work is vocal and abounding in melody. But who proved it? Lili Lehmann, Ternina, Jean de Reszke and others; trained singers who had behind them long experience of the old-fashioned Italian opera. It may fairly be said that the earlier Wagnerian singers made the words, not the music, the first consideration and thereby hid from the public the vital fact which the later singers revealed. Again it has been proved that now, as in the past, the great singers are also the great declaimers. The art of singing teaches the art of declamation. Those who give themselves up wholly or mainly to declamatory work find themselves by degrees able to do little else, and not able in the long run to do that little well. True and steady singing is quite as necessary to good declamation as to the other branches of song.

The declamatory style, then, with its frequent use of strong consonantal emphasis and abrupt and shortened vowels is dangerous, and to many singers unvocal. To say this is to detract nothing from its intrinsic value. Some of the noblest passages in music from Handel to Wagner are in the form of dramatic recitation, but in large doses it quickly fatigues the ear. After a modern opera, or a concert of modern declamatory songs I have felt as if I had been pelted with consonants, and that all love for poetry or for music had been knocked out of me.

In Shakespeare the spell of his verse is heightened by interludes in which his characters use the ordinary language of prose. Similarly in the old operas the melodious numbers have contrasting interludes of recitative. All forms of recitative or musical declamation tend to become, except in impassioned moments, conventional, in Bach as in Handel, in Strauss as in Wagner, however gallantly in

the latter instances the orchestra works to conceal the fact. But we seem now to be reaching the stage when that, which began as an interlude, ends as the model for a complete work. History is repeating itself. The first operas by Peri and Caccini, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, consisted almost entirely of recitative.

There are many songs in which the voice has little to do but add the words to an interpretative instrumental accompaniment. The voice-part may be musically interesting (even supremely so, as in 'Der Doppelgänger' or 'Der Leiermann') and may be described as declaimed melody, or it may be merely an imaginative reproduction of speech in musical notation with varying degrees of melodiousness in its phraseology, or with the melodious element suppressed. The best of these songs are well worth having. They have added something new to the world's store of beautiful and expressive things. But woe to the art of song and of singing if they drive out all the rest and become recognised as the only type worth composing. Music will never, unless it signs its own death warrant, be released permanently from its melodic, that is to say, its vocal origin. Melody is not the weakness of music but its strength. 'Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.'

WALTER FORD.

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My instinctive reply to anyone who tells me that they cannot sing such and such a passage is 'You've jolly well got to.' And it generally turns out that they can. I feel that there is no limit to what the voice can do—at any rate, I should not like to place one—and this is the only working hypothesis in the practical politics of choral singing. Experience, moreover, supports such an attitude. Sometimes one starts practising upon a work, and at the onset it appears poor in sound and definition. Then, gradually, the voices get hold of it, and what was thin and chaotic crystallises into something substantial and clear. It is often quite interesting to observe, and, of course, it is a very general happening. Sometimes, also, the whole face of things will be changed by a little extra excitement, it may be in the shape of a word of counsel or reproof, and what seems outside the scope of a choir at one moment may, the next, be well within its grasp. So that if we do not think about it much, we should, and, I believe, ought to say 'To the good singer, all things are possible.'

But if we reflect, as we are bidden to do in these pages, I suppose that we have to acknowledge certain characteristics and limitations of the voice; not so much that we may avoid the impossible as that we may secure the greatest vocal effect.

Chief of them are perhaps the following :—

(1) Singers must breathe; hence a long continued series of quick notes, or anything in the nature of *moto perpetuo* is foreign to the vocal style.

(2) Owing to the relatively low breath pressure and vocal tension required for low notes, the lowest notes of all voices are almost certain to be comparatively ineffective; and,

(3) *per contra*, owing to high breath pressure and tension (as long as it can be combined with freedom) the highest notes of any voice are the most telling.

(4) Since all intervals have to be imagined before they can be sung, those which are of a mathematically simple nature, such as the perfect and imperfect consonances, are much more likely to be well realised than augmented or diminished intervals which are intellectually far more recondite.

(5) Sudden shiftings of the breath pressure are hard to control, hence jumps and continual alteration of pitch levels which involve them should be employed with great discretion.

(6) The natural technique of the voice is *legato* rather than percussion, and smooth music will best be served by it.

(7) The closest vowels (such as Ee and Oo) and almost all consonants (but particularly the closed ones, such as D, B, G) are difficult on extreme high notes, and as far as possible these notes should be given to articulations and sounds of the widest resonance. While to the foregoing might possibly be added that

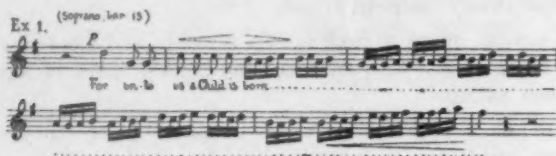
(8) Irregular rhythms and accents (which coincide with speech habits) are specially suited to singing, and we have much fallen away from grace in respect of their use.

If these characteristics were borne in mind we should probably get the minimum of effort and maximum of effect in the use of the voice, which is of the essence of vocal economy; and, as well, our singers (according to Ruskin) might have the added satisfaction of being perfect examples of political economy, inasmuch as they did not strain their voices.

To return to the above points in more detail :—

(1) The melody of both Handel and Bach, especially Bach, is more of an instrumental than a vocal order. I mean that it is right for instruments, right also, if you will, for the voice; but that it does not need words to give it structural intelligibility. Handel thinks more of the limitations of the voice in regard to breath-taking than Bach. There are relatively few rests in, say, the B minor Mass compared to the 'Messiah,' and consequently fewer obvious points of recuperation. If certain passages in the B minor seem satisfactory in performance

it is not because Bach has considered the singers, but that they consider themselves at various points and simply miss out notes; though, as others in the chorus do the same at probably a different place, the failure passes unnoticed. But for all that it is not a fair procedure to the individual singer. The extreme phrase limit of a single breath is perhaps that of the soprano passage in 'For unto us'

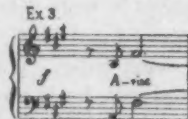


and even then the necessary crescendo at the end will be of doubtful accomplishment. But Bach in the 'Cum Sancto' of the B minor writes a passage for the soprano which considered from the standpoint of the individual singer is obviously impossible.



At the required persistent pace of this movement, breath cannot be snatched anywhere before the end, and to this extent the passage is unvocal. Breath-taking, of course, need not be confined to places where a rest is actually noted, and the spiritual continuity of music does not suffer at all if, in a sustained passage, at the proper place, breath is taken. But there must be time to breathe, and if the composer does not allow for it, it is fair comment that he has erred.

(2) In connection with the relative ineffectiveness of low notes the following passages may be cited: In the opening chorus of Part II of the 'Mass of Life' Delius gives his altos and basses this lead, accompanied by full orchestra



The first syllable of this would be scarcely heard in a general *forte* for even unaccompanied voices, but when, as in this case, a strong orchestral accompaniment goes with it, it is a perfectly useless entry. And in the quasi-fugal section of No. 3, Part I, it may be ventured

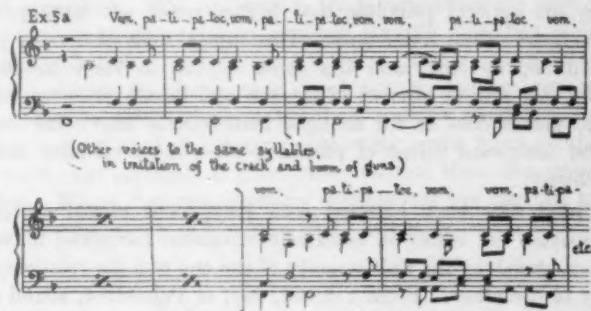


that the composer has not calculated well in giving a main accent of the theme to such a low note.

Ex 4



An even more striking example of the ineffectiveness of low notes is to be found in Jannequin's chanson 'La Bataille de Marignan' (as sung in G, by S.A.T.B., in what, I think, is the only available practical edition).



Here all the voices, for a dozen bars, are put to singing explosive syllables on their lowest notes, and it is very difficult to get sound out of this passage, or anything like the lively realistic effect that is intended.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) The 'battle of the giants' at Marignano, ten miles west of Milan, lasted two days (September 13, 14, 1515); in it the young Francis I, with the Chevalier Bayard and the flower of the French nobility, defeated Maximilian Sforza and his Swiss, and signed a 'Paix Eternelle'; nine years later he was driven out of the Milanese, and the noble Bayard was killed at Scasia.

As people do not naturally write songs about a victory immediately after its splendour has been dimmed by defeat, it is probable that Jannequin wrote his *chanson* (à 4) before September 30, 1524. This was printed in parts by Attaignant before 1537 (probably in 1529) and reprinted in score by Expert in 1898; our example is taken from that. A fifth part, by Verdelot, was added in Susato's edition, 1545. The Battle was reprinted by the Prince de la Moskowa for the *Société de musique vocale*, which was founded in 1843; but, feeling no doubt the difficulty of the low pitch, the prince transposed it to G, omitted the four bars placed in brackets, and slightly altered the onomatopoeia. It has since been sung, apparently without success, in A. The edition now placed in the hands of a choir (by Weckerlin, publisher Durand) is a reprint of de la Moskowa. Jannequin wrote for



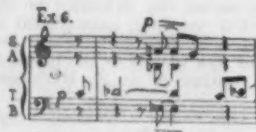
and his Superius was no doubt a 'haute-contre' (man's voice). The *chanson* would not be ineffective for A.T.B.B., though the Basses would require profundos; so that the unvocality is the mid-nineteenth century editor's, not the composer's.—[Ed.]

(3) For sheer rightness in almost every aspect of vocal writing—length of phrase, placing of notes, treatment of large intervals, etc.—the 'Hallelujah' chorus probably holds the palm, and its popularity is not to be wondered at from the point of view of tonal splendour alone. No better example of the telling use of high pressure registers could be given than the mighty pronouncement of the sopranos at 'Lord of Lords, King of Kings' where those long notes rise in growing power from the higher D to G, contrast with the short acclaiming 'Hallelujahs' of the other voices, and comfortably dominate the situation.

Climax and interest in vocal writing depends very largely on utilising the general principle that higher notes are more powerful and penetrative than lower ones. The natural arch of a vocal phrase is determined by this; and the same applies to wind instruments generally, for similar reasons of tension and breath pressure, though it by no means does so for stringed instruments where the inverted arch and downward thrust of phrase is often more effective than the rising thrust.

(4) Those who have handled both polyphonic choral music and music written for voices in especially advanced harmonic idiom will have been struck by the rich sonority of the one and the relatively poor sonority of the other. From a motet, say, of Palestrina, sound seems to come easily and generously, whereas from the modern part-song it has to be extracted almost as it were under protest. The reason for this is probably twofold. First, the notes of simpler chords tend to reinforce each other by combining to build up a large consonant series of overtones; but this does not occur in like measure in respect of highly dissonant chords. Secondly, notes in highly dissonant chords cannot be handled with such certainty as those in simple chords. They are very difficult to hold. It is much more of an intellectual strain.

A passage which gave me great trouble with the Oriana choir, purely from the point of view of intonation was the opening bar of Gerrard Williams' unaccompanied 'Tragic Fragment,' an interesting essay in advanced harmonic writing.



It scarcely ever sounded right, and I was never very sure who was to blame, though by all the laws it should have been the

sopranos who had the hardest note, the A, to sing. In fairness to the composer, however, it must be admitted that voices in themselves are seldom quite in tune owing to faulty production, and their sin, by so much as a hair's-breadth finds them out when they have to deal with chords like this. Such dissonances have, in fact, to be sung with absolutely perfect intonation, or the impression is given of consonances somehow gone wrong. Whereas a consonance can be sung with intonation that is slightly at fault and yet the result is quite understood for what it is meant to be. The above illustrates two great difficulties specially connected with the mentality of singing (a) that of subtly-pitched note-attack and (b) that of holding the note when once it is pitched. The tendency is for a very dissonant note to shift to an easy consonance, just as, through slightly imperfect intonation, they are liable to be misunderstood for one. Music of this sort, therefore, will always be placed at a disadvantage in performance, as compared with music which is based on simpler chords. I will not say that a great deal of modern vocal music gives more trouble than it is worth, but certainly it gives more trouble than one usually has time for. When, however, extreme dissonances are handled as Holst does in the famous passage from the 'Hymn of Jesus'

Ex. 7.

1<sup>st</sup> Choir

2<sup>nd</sup> Choir

Instruments  
Bass

no one can complain, and their realisation is a matter of no great difficulty. It will be noticed that the passage starts and ends on consonance, so that the dissonances are easily located; and they are not percussive but occur through easy linear means.

Modern composers, I think, sometimes forget that singing, from first to last, is dependent on mental and not mechanical processes. For not only do they expect voices to attack dissonances with the

assurance of instruments—often quite 'out of the blue' and with no preparation such as the older composers allowed—but they jot down notes in a voice-part without reference to their logical sequence. This gives the singer unnecessary difficulty, and also detracts from his pleasure very much. I quite see that a singer has not to be considered above aught else—the music must come first—but it is better to keep him happy than discontented. And continually to vex and tax him to the utmost is bad policy if you wish him to like your music as much as he likes the classics.

Delius is prone to dispense with this logic of line. In the choral section of 'The Song of the High Hills' occurs the following, in which the first altos might fairly object that they do not see the drift of their own part, and wonder why they are chivied about, up hill and down dale, to reinforce first the second tenors, then the first, then the second sopranos and finally the second altos, all within the space of two bars.

EX. 8

I am not saying that the effect of this passage is not good. In the *ensemble*, it makes unforgettably beautiful sound. But if this sort of thing were the usual procedure of composers, and it might be carried a good deal further than even Delius does, it would present great and especial difficulties for singers, with in nine cases out of ten no corresponding advantages.

(5) With a sure instinct as to what was best to sing—Delius notably has it too—the polyphonic writers, expert above all others in the use of the voice (for vocal writing was their special, if limited, domain), wrote mostly in conjunct motion. When larger intervals were taken the voice was usually made to return towards

the point of departure by step and not leap. The reason for this was probably partly artistic, partly vocal. For by this procedure balance and poise of phrase was secured, as well as easy singing. Such a passage as



would be quite easy on the violin, but though within the compass of a soprano or tenor it would be a *tour de force* to sing. If it were given to voices, plenty of time would have to be given too, or it would be informed with insufficient sound, even if there were no smudging of the notes. So for practical considerations large intervals should be used with discretion both in regard to speed and disposition.

(6) To get the voice into full vibration at once, or in other words to get instantaneous note attack, is extremely difficult—and this difficulty is further increased if the note is of very short duration, a mere *spiccato* stab. A single note of this sort presents quite a technical problem to the singer, much more so a quick series of such notes and when there are words as well to articulate. Moreover, it is not only a question of sharp note attack and release. Tone quality is also involved. Such notes have to be like brilliant sparks of light, if they are to tell. Ordinary sympathetic, sentimental tone is useless. It has to be hard, vital; clanging like a bit of metal or hammer-wood. In other words it has to be brought so far forward that it almost ceases to be vocal tone in the accepted sense. Such pieces as Grainger's Christmas Song 'There was a pig went out to dig,' W. G. Whittaker's 'Christmas Day in the morning,' and also his wordless arrangement of the Northumbrian pipes tune 'Sir John Fenwick' have to be treated in this way, at least that is my experience; and even then the result is not quite satisfactory. It is a risky business giving voices this type of music to sing, and, in general, it is better suited to instruments. The 'Messiah' Chorus 'Let us break their bonds asunder' might also be cited as a broader example of the same thing. If taken at the quick pace affected by some conductors it becomes little more than a succession of spits of breath, and the tremendous energy of the text and music can scarcely be communicated.

The voice is in its element, however, in slowish *legato* music, for words which are its natural expression are usually uttered *legato* and in a more or less leisurely way. In short, I think it will always



follow that the nearer vocal music comes to the style and practice of ordinary speech the more likely will it be successful in performance, and in saying this I am not forgetting the possibilities of *coloratura* singing and the undoubtedly attractive feats of its exponents.

(7) Attention has already been drawn by other writers in this journal to the extravagant demands made upon his singers by Beethoven. It is not that he requires too high notes, but too many of them. In exercises I sometimes take the sopranos of the Philharmonic Choir up to E $\flat$  in alt, and find that the majority of them are quite able to give a respectable account of this note. It is in the keeping of the voice at extreme range that misjudgment occurs. It is beyond the physical power of most singers to sing more than one or two of their highest notes consecutively and well. And so, by asking them to do so, instead of getting increased effect, such as was intended, considerably less is achieved.

We speak at a low pitch. That is why speech is so much more resonant and free than most singing—the relation between power and ease might be discussed more fully here, but one must pass on—and when we glibly ask singers to ‘sing as they would speak’ we are apt to forget that speech at a high pitch is a vastly different thing from speech at a low. We are also apt to forget that even vowels were invented—if I may venture the term—to be used at this low spoken pitch. If speech had been contemplated at the extremes of the voice, doubtless certain vowels and consonants would not have been selected at all—only the most open and easily produced ones. Thus the comparatively thin and closed vowels, Ee and Oo, are very difficult to sound with pure delivery on the highest notes, and the closed consonants such as B, D, G cannot be sung at all, in their integrity, with their characteristic ‘voicing,’ which should of course occur on the note given to the following vowel. What we (or composers) are going to do about it, I do not know. A choral composer is at the start fettered by the words he has to use. Poets do not write words to be sung—thank the Lord!—except in a very general way. They are not concerned with problems of pitch at all. And it would be just as fitting, and perhaps safer, to get them to write words to music, as for the musician to have to write music to words. Whatever the poet may say, ‘music and sweet poeirie’ do not entirely agree, and whether a song is considered from the poet’s or musician’s standpoint some compromise is needed, some freedom must be surrendered. But if this were carried to its perfect conclusion, if everything were ‘just right’ both as regards words and music, if, in short, we had not only *le mot juste* but *la note juste*, there would probably be no poetry or music at all worth the having and it would be over-conscious fabrication!

(8) On the title page of an Elizabethan madrigal book may often be seen 'Madrigals in 3, 4 or 5 parts, apt for viols and voyces,' from which it would seem that the writers apparently recognised no difference between a vocal and instrumental style. Yet I think that, rhythmically, we are bound to recognise a difference, and when we are confronted with a true instrumental piece in, say, a later suite of dances, we cannot admit that a madrigal is instrumental in this sense. The voice is, or may be, an instrument, in being able to produce music apart from words, but speech was its original concern, and historically there can be no question but that music was closely allied to and determined by verbal structure, before it existed in its own right. Thus we may expect to find and do find in Gregorian song and in its natural successor, polyphonic melody, that they take shape from verbal accent and not from an accent that is purely musical and self-evident. And music, as long as it is combined with words and it is desired to safeguard their beauty, must comply with verbal accenting rather than musical. The problem on the whole was solved most successfully by the polyphonic writers, who frankly adopted an irregular prose structure for the purpose, rather than a regular metrical one. Its clue lies effectively in verbal accent, and not in metre, and so it has hardly any *raison d'être* apart from the words and certainly is not 'apt for viols' in the sense that a dance measure would be. Melody of this rhythmic type could thus, above all other, sensitively reflect the subtle stresses and flow of fine poetry. I say fine poetry advisedly, because mere jingled doggerel, to which jingled music is applicable, does not in the main engage the attention of serious musicians.

According, therefore, as to whether the bias of a vocal composer is towards words or music, he will adopt a comparatively free or comparatively fixed rhythm. Likewise a singer with a bias towards beautiful verbal utterance will find a phrase ungrateful if the words tend to distort from their natural flow; while another, caring little for the beauty of words, will find his chief pleasure in a purely instrumental use of the voice, where the words go hang. The truth is that you can scarcely have it to the full both ways, and again it must be said that poetry and sweet music do not absolutely agree. The meaning of words (in the fullest sense) is one thing, the meaning of music another; and the rhythmic forms in which these meanings are embodied must differ, though they have been so jumbled up over the centuries as to be nowadays scarcely distinguishable. But a revaluation and renaissance of vocal style is in progress.

The upshot of it all seems to be that song may be divided into three categories: (1) that which is unvocal to the extent of being unsingable; (2) that which is difficult and more or less ineffective;

and (8) that which is easy and more or less effective. Beyond notes quite outside its range and speed, the only absolute limitations to the voice and therefore the only things which are entirely unvocal are in phrases where breath cannot be taken though there is need of it, and in a few consonants, if too highly pitched. For the rest it is a matter of relative difficulty and effect, in which the best results will probably obtain the more nearly they reflect everyday habits of speech, allowing always that song is speech raised to higher levels of pitch and intensity. But it is as well to remember that not only can a difficult thing be made more easy by practice. Paradoxically, to achieve perfection, easy things have to be made more difficult, too. And though there is almost nothing in singing that is too difficult, yet there is nothing that it is really quite easy, if it is to be worth anything. Roberts was once asked what was the easiest stroke at billiards. 'There is no easy stroke,' he replied. And in singing it is the same. There is no easy note or word—still less an easy phrase.

C. KENNEDY SCOTT.

*Note.*—See also Miss Erhart's article, pp. 394-5.

## A DICTIONARY OF CHAMBER MUSIC

THE first volume of this dictionary<sup>(1)</sup> looks outwardly much like any other example of its dignified kind—at any rate such as have been sponsored by the Oxford University Press or Messrs. Macmillan. Aristocratic dark blue covers touched with a little gold, broad open pages, wide margins, double columns of clear print, alphabetical chapters A to H, and alphabetical subsections dotted with cross-references—this is Cobbett's *Cyclopedia* at first sight. On a second inspection, and much more so after prolonged study, it is impossible to regard it as an ordinary lexicon. For one thing, this is the only book of its kind that exists upon chamber music. For another, though it can be consulted lexicon-wise on almost any matter germane to chamber music, it has none of the cold detachment usually associated with a cyclopedia. 'Cobbett' is not a compilation to read, like the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, on a desert island. No; it is too full of companionship, too persuasive towards shared work and play, too friendly, too human for any sterile solitude. But as a book for working days and holidays, as a mentor for professional and amateur musicians, as an authoritative standard, as a mine of information, and as an antidote to pessimism it is wholly admirable.

This genial atmosphere is primarily due to Mr. Cobbett in his double rôle of editor and contributor, and to his avowed policy of 'ignoring those prejudices of race, nationality, and school, which menace the best interests of art.' He also chose writers whom he knew to be 'either by nationality or proclivity, in sympathy with the subjects treated.' If this led, on the debit side, to some composers receiving more than their meed of space or praise, the gain on the credit side is certainly a liberal compensation. Construction, not destruction, is the keynote of the *Cyclopedia*, and service, not cynicism, its dominant idea.

Books sometimes take matters into their own hands. I remember once hearing Sir Arthur Conan Doyle complain, with rueful humour, that he had intended Sherlock Holmes to be an embodiment of pure intellect—an icy character without human ties or emotion. Instead, Holmes insisted on playing the violin and developed artistic tendencies. The disconcerted author had to submit.

(1) *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*. By Walter Willson Cobbett. Vol. I. A—H. Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford. Two volumes, £5 5s. net.

and (3) that which is easy and more or less effective. Beyond notes quite outside its range and speed, the only absolute limitations to the voice and therefore the only things which are entirely unvocal are in phrases where breath cannot be taken though there is need of it, and in a few consonants, if too highly pitched. For the rest it is a matter of relative difficulty and effect, in which the best results will probably obtain the more nearly they reflect everyday habits of speech, allowing always that song is speech raised to higher levels of pitch and intensity. But it is as well to remember that not only can a difficult thing be made more easy by practice. Paradoxically, to achieve perfection, easy things have to be made more difficult, too. And though there is almost nothing in singing that is too difficult, yet there is nothing that it is really quite easy, if it is to be worth anything. Roberts was once asked what was the easiest stroke at billiards. 'There is no easy stroke,' he replied. And in singing it is the same. There is no easy note or word—still less an easy phrase.

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Something of the same kind has happened with Mr. Cobbett's *Cyclopaedia*, only he is not disconcerted and indeed positively revels in the book's personality. That is characteristic. He might easily have written an autobiography; many men would have done so. Instead he has made this *Cyclopaedia*, which contains, in his own contributions, the distilled essence of all he has learnt, experienced, and observed during the course of a long career—and contains also the pick of the mental acquisitions of picked contributors, led off by a fine preface from Sir Henry Hadow.

In this warm, broad, human scholarship, this generous manner of making a book, there is something typically English—or at least one likes to think so. German research is synonymous with immense erudition; French intellect functions with the precision of pure science. Englishmen are less concerned with the abstract than either; personality plays a big part in their *belles lettres*. Some of the best loved, most lasting books in the language are not by professional authors, not even by professionals turned author on their own business, but by men who, possessed of an absorbing passion for some nominally second subject, find it in the long run their title to fame. In its lowest form this is a hobby, in its highest a romance. 'A' is the second string of the violin, yet it is the one from which all the others are tuned.

Plenty of instances are at hand. Gerard, who wrote the famous *Herbal*, was primarily a doctor. But it is his love and knowledge of flowers that survive the centuries. White of Selborne and Izack Walton did not appear to their contemporaries as they do to us. Stow perhaps came nearest blending profession and passion into one, since he was an antiquary, and made his own memorial in his *Survey of London*. His mantle fell upon Walter Besant, at the distance of three centuries. Besant was a novelist by profession and a philanthropist by conviction, nevertheless history will remember him by the books in which he celebrated London—the city he knew better than any other man of his generation, and which he first learnt to love by tramping its streets as an escape from the grinding loneliness of his lodgings. George Grove was an engineer whose absorbing devotion to music grew until it drew him to his life-work at the Royal College of Music and to the compilation of his famous *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. To the last he maintained he was an amateur of music.

Sir George Grove in his *Dictionary* confined himself to those articles which he wrote with warm enthusiasm (his *Schubert* is the most characteristic example), but Mr. Cobbett has taken a wider view of the editorial function. With him, the editor becomes a good host:

his contributors are the artists whom he engages; his readers are the guests. The host moves here, there and everywhere—now making a genial comment, now effecting an introduction, now giving some wise advice. In short, he is a host in himself. Almost every article is followed by his annotations—like the easy talk of a friend—and he writes many independent articles and paragraphs upon matters connected with his life-work. These major contributions include such varied topics as *Acoustics*, *Amateur*, *Anthology*, *Arrangements*, *Baillot*, *Beethoven*, *The Chamber Music Life*, *Walter Willson Cobbett*, *Cobbett Competitions*, *Commercialism and Chamber Music*, *Mrs. Coolidge*, *Fancy*, *Fesca*, *Flonzaley Quartet*, *Gade*, *Gardiner*, *Gatty*, *Haydn*, and *Humour in Chamber Music*.

Of the autobiographical articles, that on *The Chamber Music Life* is by far the longest. It opens with a passage which offers, in essentials, a striking parallel to what we read of William Cobbett of the *Rural Rides*. External circumstances were different, but both Cobbetts seemed to have experienced a revelation at the outset of their careers. One was a Surrey lad, humbly born and poor; the other was the son of cultivated parents living in Kent. To William Cobbett the revelation came when he was eleven. Being told of the wonders of Kew, he set out on foot to seek employment there. Only threepence remained in his pocket when he reached Richmond, and that he spent on a book which attracted him in a shop window. It was Swift's *Tale of a Tub*. 'Sitting under a haystack he read until it was dark, and then fell asleep; it was what he afterwards regarded as a "birth of intellect."' "

Now listen to Walter Willson Cobbett:

The limitless enthusiasm which has reigned in my heart during the greater part of my life for the study of chamber music did not exist in early youth. I believe it sprang into existence the first time I heard Joachim lead a Beethoven quartet at St. James's Hall, for then I realised that here was an art for which I had a definite affinity. It is not an exaggeration to say that there opened before me an enchanted world into which I longed to gain an entrance. . . . It was a revelation. I became a regular attendant at the 'Popular' concerts, and the true inwardness of chamber music became so well known to me that had I continued to regard it as a mere pastime or hobby I should have been untrue to myself. From that moment onward I became a very humble devotee of this infinitely beautiful art, and so began for me the chamber music life.

That is a fair sample of Mr. Cobbett's style in his longer articles. Besides their autobiographic interest they have the merit of being written in a most readable way, and contain the accumulated *sagesse*

of a long-experienced violin player. Here is an extract by which both string players and composers might profit :

Many years ago it dawned upon me that passages in the dark keys—E flat, A flat, D flat, etc., were less easy to master than those written in the more open keys, and I remembered that in the violin studies most familiar to me flat keys were very much in the minority (Rode excepted). Thus, when I first studied the leading part in the 'Harp' quartet, op. 74, the brilliant arpeggio passage at the end of the opening movement failed to yield to practice as I expected, and I felt that something must be done to familiarise my fingers with similar intervals. This was accomplished by the frequent transposition of studies from bright to dark keys. Kreutzer's second I played in A flat, his eighth in E flat, and so with the studies and concertos of other writers.

If there were more of this sort of practice there would be less imperfect intonation on concert platforms; but to return to Mr. Cobbett :

Every key represents a mood, but I will make a confession of weakness. It sometimes happens that when I am trying a modern quartet for the first time, and see stretching before me a grim-looking adagio in five, six or seven flats, I do sigh for the chirp of an open string with its attendant harmonics, for a gleam of light amid the darkness of stopped strings.

Exactly! Does not every string player know that feeling, though few have the grit to avow it. Hindemith, himself a string player as well as a most progressive composer, rids his scores of that discouraging look by clearing them of key signatures, and renders them effective by a frequent use of what may be described as the open progressions.

Turning to the Cobbett comments (so numerous as almost to equal a little book), one finds they are of every kind and length, from the exhaustive addenda to articles on *Beethoven* and *Haydn* by Vincent D'Indy and Donald F. Tovey, to such a friendly little tip as this :

Of Glière I have something to say which will surprise many readers. . . . His twelve short duets for two violins are quite unique . . . these duets please listeners almost as much as a string quartet. But by what magic this is accomplished I know not, for it must frankly be admitted that duets for two violins are tedious as a rule.

Following the Cobbett articles, those on *Chamber Music* present themselves as the core of the book. One, by Professor Dent, covers the period from *Beginnings* to *Haydn*. The other, by Professor Tovey, is presumably designed to bring the survey down to the present day.

Professor Dent writes in a way that makes one believe history and chamber music to be as near and clear as mountain landscapes in a summer dawn. Professor Tovey awes one into a stunned admiration of their immensity and complexity.

Could anyone have guessed there were so many pitfalls as Professor Tovey points out? At this point an interesting interplay between the authors becomes apparent: it presently proves an essential feature of the *Cyclopedia*. It is as if the articles discoursed to each other across the pages. The fact that they advance slightly different opinions is to the good. Instead of pontifical dogma we get the testimony of expert witnesses. Readers are placed in possession of the facts, then left to judge for themselves. This is particularly agreeable in matters where there can be no final certainty unless new evidence should turn up. For instance, that question of the authorship of the first string quartet. Professor Dent presents a strong case for Alessandro Scarlatti; Dr. Eaglefield Hull advances the claims of Gregorio Allegri; Hugo Leichtentritt brings forward Dall'Abaco with his *Concerti a quattro da Chiesa* (1712-14).

Professor Tovey takes the line (in his article on *Haydn*) that there were string quartets before Haydn, but nobody troubles to revive them. 'Haydn himself was indignant at the suggestion he owed anything to the quartets of Gluck's master, Sammartini.'

Professor Dent judiciously says a last word to the effect that 'The ancestry of Haydn's quartets is not to be sought in such works as the quartets of Alessandro Scarlatti, but in the symphonies of Sammartini and the South German composers at Vienna and Mannheim who followed in his footsteps. The classical string quartet is a reduction and refinement of the symphony for string orchestra, which accounts immediately for the entire want of connection between the style of Corelli or Handel, and that of Haydn and Mozart. String quartets in the classical manner do not appear in Italy until about 1770, and it is obvious that these works derive more from the model of the Viennese school than from their own Italian forerunners.'

And the editor adds a last-last word in the form of a footnote to support Haydn.

That is a typical example of these delightful symposiums.

But there are times when readers, with that utmost deference due from the less to the greater learning, will feel disposed to enter into a discourse themselves with the authors. For example, Professor Dent writes that 'The chief fault of the sonata for two violins was that composers, in their anxiety to make both violin parts equally interesting, often spoiled the beauty of their melodies by too frequent crossing of the parts. . . . One instrument must either become



frankly subordinate to the other or it must insist on its equality at the cost of mutual interference.'

Very true : and yet a higher truth comes along in the person of J. S. Bach with his Concerto in D minor for two Violins where the violin parts continually rise above each other in the slow movement with a beauty nothing short of divine. It is the consummate expression in wordless sound of a vision analogous to that which inspired Milton in his ' Sphere-born, harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse.'

Professor Tovey employs his article on *Chamber Music* mainly as a long approach to his one on *Haydn*. He knows that unless we are shown the world before Haydn, where all chamber music contained a continuo, we cannot estimate the magnitude of Haydn's achievement. The profound learning of Professor Tovey is impressive, and the article absolutely invaluable to anyone who is called upon to either play from or transcribe a continuo part. So impressive indeed is his writing that when one meets the sentence ' In modern times four great errors arise in the treatment of the continuo ' one feels as if suddenly confronted by the four great beasts of ' Revelations.' Presently, however, string players will gather enough strength to enter a little plea in favour of the fourth beast. He is, it seems, that ' worst error ' of ' filling out with parts that avoid doubling or otherwise colliding with the main lines.' Well, he is evidently a considerate beast, and at least one eminent contemporary of John Sebastian and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach kept him as a pet animal. Geminiani was as emphatic against doubling the main lines as Professor Tovey is for doing it. The solution would seem to be this—that the application of the continuo is not an immutable law but should be in the nature of a sliding scale, varying with the constituents of the chamber works. Professor Tovey apparently bases his argument (if I read his article aright) on a study of the relation between voices and orchestra in the choruses of Bach and Handel. Very interesting, but only very doubtfully within the pale of chamber music. On the other hand, a violin sonata is chamber music in its simplest form.

Passing on to the great masters of chamber music, the articles upon *Beethoven*, *Brahms* and *Haydn* stand in a class by themselves. They are long enough to be independent pamphlets, and written (as Beethoven said music should be) from the heart to the heart. That on *Beethoven*, by Vincent D'Indy, strongly supports the ' Three Period ' theory, deals individually with the works assigned to each, and says innumerable finely thought and finely felt things that are the more convincing—or challenging—because they come from a mentality outside that of the ordinary English musical observer. Strange to see how differently the same work may strike the great Frenchman and our own eager selves; to Monsieur D'Indy the ' well-

known rhythm,' quoted on page 88, is the expression of Beethoven's patriotism, as it was current at that time for all military music. Does Monsieur D'Indy feel it always symbolises something earthly; for instance, when it occurs in the slow movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto? In the 'Emperor' it may well mean patriotism, but in the Violin Concerto it is just as probably the soft knock which opens a postern into the stellar spaces.

Professor Tovey treats his *Brahms* less fancifully. He justly says that 'the most convenient way to enter into Brahms' æsthetic system is to begin with his first extant piece of chamber music, the B major Trio, op. 8, and to compare it with the new version published between twenty and thirty years later.' This he proceeds to do, and then takes his readers through the remaining twenty-three chamber works with incomparable knowledge and enthusiasm. His immediate personal links with Brahms give a remarkable sense of direct authority to what he says—as if from the composer himself—and this sense of direct contact grows stronger in the valuable article on *Some Personal Recollections of Brahms as Pianist and Interpreter* contributed by Miss Fanny Davies. Her paper stands almost alone in this volume in that it touches upon the great *executive* traditions of chamber music. The matter is of more urgency than might appear. There can be no doubt that certain schools of composition require the development of certain schools of interpretation if the works are to be heard truly.

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There is no denying that Arthur Honegger is popular. This is all the more striking when we consider the relative unpopularity of his harmonic and rhythmic peers—Strawinsky, Schönberg, Prokofieff, or Hindemith. Honegger has never sacrificed his modern idiom for the sake of being understood, but in some way his music excites admiration which is different from the rather fierce and conscious acclamation accorded to Strawinsky. We like Honegger spontaneously because he gives us something more than a sense of experiment: his music rests on foundations which we know to be of good stuff.

Honegger regards himself as Swiss, and it is therefore not surprising to find in his music French and German elements. We must not, however, make too much of this. One of the most noticeable features in his music is its lack of national colour, all the more remarkable to-day in the midst of so many French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Slav schools. I shall refer to this again. At present there are two distinct Honeggers. The well-known and more popular Honegger wrote 'Pacific 231,' 'Rugby,' 'The Tempest'; a different Honegger composed the string quartet, 'King David,' and the *Cahier Romand*. I think that the latter Honegger will prove to be of more permanent worth.

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But, as I have hinted, this is the less important Honegger. 'King David,' for example, shows an economy of material—even in its revised orchestral form—and the counterpoint of the vocal writing is not only effective but also singularly beautiful. The 'Alleluia's' at the end of Part I and of Part 2 are a case in point:—



frankly subordinate to the other or it must insist on its equality at the cost of mutual interference.'

Very true : and yet a higher truth comes along in the person of J. S. Bach with his Concerto in D minor for two Violins where the violin parts continually rise above each other in the slow movement with a beauty nothing short of divine. It is the consummate expression in wordless sound of a vision analogous to that which inspired Milton in his ' Sphere-born, harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse.'

Professor Tovey employs his article on *Chamber Music* mainly as a long approach to his one on *Haydn*. He knows that unless we are shown the world before Haydn, where all chamber music contained a continuo, we cannot estimate the magnitude of Haydn's achievement. The profound learning of Professor Tovey is impressive, and the article absolutely invaluable to anyone who is called upon to either play from or transcribe a continuo part. So impressive indeed is his writing that when one meets the sentence ' In modern times four great errors arise in the treatment of the continuo ' one feels as if suddenly confronted by the four great beasts of ' Revelations.' Presently, however, string players will gather enough strength to enter a little plea in favour of the fourth beast. He is, it seems, that ' worst error ' of ' filling out with parts that avoid doubling or otherwise colliding with the main lines.' Well, he is evidently a considerate beast, and at least one eminent contemporary of John Sebastian and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach kept him as a pet animal. Geminiani was as emphatic against doubling the main lines as Professor Tovey is for doing it. The solution would seem to be this—that the application of the continuo is not an immutable law but should be in the nature of a sliding scale, varying with the constituents of the chamber works. Professor Tovey apparently bases his argument (if I read his article aright) on a study of the relation between voices and orchestra in the choruses of Bach and Handel. Very interesting, but only very doubtfully within the pale of chamber music. On the other hand, a violin sonata is chamber music in its simplest form.

Passing on to the great masters of chamber music, the articles upon *Beethoven*, *Brahms* and *Haydn* stand in a class by themselves. They are long enough to be independent pamphlets, and written (as Beethoven said music should be) from the heart to the heart. That on *Beethoven*, by Vincent D'Indy, strongly supports the ' Three Period ' theory, deals individually with the works assigned to each, and says innumerable finely thought and finely felt things that are the more convincing—or challenging—because they come from a mentality outside that of the ordinary English musical observer. Strange to see how differently the same work may strike the great Frenchman and our own eager selves ; to Monsieur D'Indy the ' well-

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chords or intellectual development. The three main themes of 'Pacific' are all used in counterpoint. Here is an example:—

Ex 1

Pacific 131  
non tone p 131

Top

con con Ang colla da d

Tob

C Bass

and so on for three more entries. The scheme of 'Rugby' is almost identical to 'Pacific' and in places the dissonances are more acute. These two tone poems are brilliantly written and undoubtedly 'come off.' Their extreme vitality carries us along, but when we examine the scores we doubt if so much counterpoint is suitable to the context and if it is altogether worth while. The orchestration is often thick and muddy, especially in the lower strings and woodwind, and the scores contain far too many notes. The following example shows a very favourite device; the instruments can hardly speak and anyway are drowned by the rest of the orchestra:—

Ex 2

Pacific 131  
non tone p 131

colla da d

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Ex 3

'King David' 131  
non tone p 131

Al...

Al...

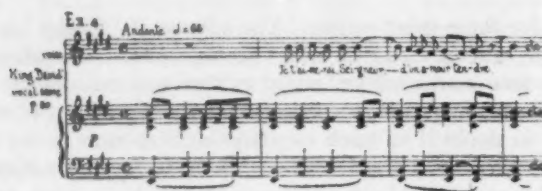
Al...

Al...

Al...

The same theme is used in the Lamentations of Gilboa with different accompaniment. Counterpoint is again used in the Psalm of Penitence. In fact, Honegger produces magnificent volume and quality of sound by writing horizontally for the voice parts and vertically for the orchestra.

Another likeable characteristic of Honegger's music is its limpidity. His fondness for fourths and fifths makes for clearness and easily assimilable dissonances.

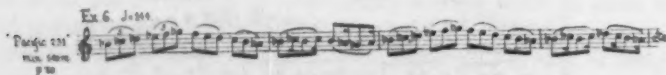


Here Honegger has abandoned the ineffective fussiness of Ex. 2. A further example, taken from the Five Piano Pieces written in 1928, is typical Honegger:—

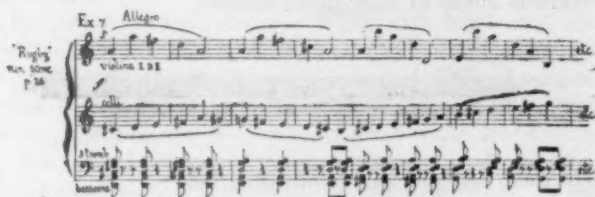


I would draw your attention to the chromatic formations for the right hand at A, and to the last bar with its careful omission of the third. These characteristics are to be found throughout Honegger's compositions.

In most of his work the themes are easily recognisable and can be committed to memory, since they are short and diatonic, though there may be, as in 'Pacific' and 'Rugby,' one or more juxtapositions of tonality. They soar their way through and above the texture. Who could fail to notice or to forget the locomotive theme tearing along at top speed:—



which is continued and developed contrapuntally. Or again the Rugby theme :—



The finest themes of all are to be found in the string quartet. Personally, I think this is Honegger's best work so far. It is in three movements. The writing for the instruments is throughout perfectly suitable to them. There is no padding, each instrument has something important to say all the time; the thematic texture is very close. In the first movement (*violent et tourmenté*) one might almost say that there is no accompaniment in the usual sense. The instruments play themes in counterpoint, canon, development, inversion, etc. Three complete themes are employed together frequently and without apparent difficulty; sometimes we find four.

Ex 8 J. 179  
Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Cello  
Double Bass  
cresc. poco a poco

The second movement (*très lent*) and the third (*rude et rythmique*) contain passages of great beauty. It would be meaningless to talk of French and German influences; we shall have to admit that this is

'Honegger,' no more and no less. Here is one of the themes from the first movement: Ex. 8 is the continuation of it. It is an instance of the vigorous sweep of Honegger's themes.



Movement three contains this beautiful melody:—



The slow movement is exceptionally beautiful. This is the first theme:—



I have quoted enough to give you some indication of the chief characteristics of Honegger's music. Let us now consider his output as a whole.

We are struck firstly by his individuality or, shall we say, personality. So much of modern music might be written by any one of half a dozen young men following closely the lead of a contemporary 'master.' The 'Rite of Spring' still exercises its driving power over many; Schönberg accounts for more, and at the moment neo-classicism is claiming most. Honegger stands out in relief. This is not to say that he has never been influenced by his contemporaries; all young composers should be. Perhaps 'Pacific 231' would not have been written without the 'Rite of Spring'; traces of Schönberg can be found in movement one of the string quartet. But Honegger is master of what he has absorbed from others. He alone would have written the piano pieces and the string quartet; they are unmistakably



and individually Honegger. In other words Honegger has already created his own style, which is the first important development for a young composer to make and should enlist our interest in him.

He has not produced work of a consistently high level, naturally. The songs, though effective enough, are not on the whole above the rather vague atmospheric type in vogue in France. I cannot judge the sonatas since I have not heard good performances; they are interesting, but require clear cut form which is not Honegger's strong suit. Nor have I heard 'Horace Victorieux,' described in the *Dictionary of Modern Musicians* as 'of epic inspiration.' I ought not to omit mention of the 'Pastoral d'Eté' since it is well known in England: it is an early work and cannot be regarded as typical Honegger. 'Pacific' and 'Rugby' are likely to remain popular for some time if only on account of their titles. We are apt to be chary of ascribing permanent value to music even ever so slightly programmatic. Honegger himself has definitely denied the programme basis to his symphonic poems, and 'Rugby,' at least, can be treated as pure music as much as a Strauss tone poem. At present we welcome their exuberant vitality and must admit that they do fulfil a popular need.

'King David' has no right to succeed in performance. It consists of 'snippets' joined together quite arbitrarily by the recitation of a narrator. The music is by turns Handel, Strawinsky, Mendelssohn, and Honegger. Before each performance I have been prejudiced against it and each time I have been convinced of its success. It is a dramatic work but never descends to the theatrical. The Psalm of Penitence and the Hebrews' and Philistines' marches are astonishingly successful. The beauty of the final choruses to Parts 1 and 2 help to give the final favourable impression. It will be interesting to hear Honegger's work in progress—'Amphion' for female voices and orchestra.

I have already praised the string quartet. (Readers may be especially recommended to study it on Columbia records.) I consider the quartet some of the finest music the younger generation has yet produced. It by no means shirks dissonance, but the discords are never used for 'effect.' We are all wanting a composer to graft the new harmonic technique on to a sound basis and this string quartet seems to be a step in the right direction. Honegger may show us that it is possible to develop the classical tradition without becoming neo-classic, whatever that may purport. Is it too much to say that in Honegger's music we can sense *inspiration* rather than the cleverness that is the be-all and end-all of too much contemporary composition?

A. G. BROWNE.

## KASTALSKY AND HIS RUSSIAN FOLK POLYPHONY

THE national songs of every people are tinged with a something peculiar to themselves, which it is very difficult to define in more or less accurate phraseology. The determination of that something—i.e., the essential nature of the folk music of every nationality—should be the supreme object and the most important task of the comparative study of music, which should elucidate for us the general laws underlying the creation of national music in any part of the world, and the specific traits distinguishing the music of one country from that of another.

This is, of course, a long and arduous task, since every period introduces its own emendations and refinements, dependent upon the increase of material which occurs with every new era, and upon the ideas commonly prevalent in that era. But in this respect the comparative study of music shares the fate of all sciences based on experiment and observation, and does not prove to be a happy exception to the general rule; in any given period it aims at extreme accuracy in its investigations, but does not achieve any absolute result, which would seem to be no more than the ideal illuminating the student's path.

All this applies not only throughout the sphere of the comparative study of music, which generalises the musical folklore of the world, but also to the various national branches of that science, each confining itself to investigating the musico-creative work of some one nation. And though the Russian national school of the comparative study of music is one of the youngest, its progress is evident in the gradual accumulation of material and in the change in the general theories and methods of research. The first printed collections of Russian folk songs did not appear until 1776 and the actual study of them began only in the middle of the nineteenth century. But during this comparatively short period the views on Russian song underwent a series of modifications, which were first reflected in the methods of harmonising the Russian national melodies. The last stage in the evolution of these views on the harmony of the Russian folk song is more or less familiar beyond the confines of Russia, as it was fixed in several collections published at intervals during the second half of the nineteenth century, the best known being those of Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Anatoly Lyadov. In these the songs are provided with fine pianoforte accompaniments, based on the harmony which

created the fame of the Russian national school and which until lately was regarded as the profoundest conception of the spirit and essence of the Russian national vocal element.

But this notwithstanding, these elaborations no longer seem quite satisfactory to musicians of the twentieth century, who find them to a certain extent obsolete and stamped with the impress of the theories of their day rather than permeated with the essential quality of the Russian folk melos and folk harmony. The first twenty-five years of this century, with its phonograph records of the national tunes and its interest in the study of those tunes in *their original folk polyphonic elaboration*, have wrought a considerable change in the views as to the nature of the Russian folk song, and have compelled investigators and composers to enquire into it more closely than did Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov, and other contemporary harmonisers of the national melos.

The late Aleksandr Dmitrievich Kastalsky must be regarded as the most brilliant and systematic exponent of these modern ideas. His work entitled *The Principles of the Russian National Musical System*, published in Moscow by the Music Section of the State Publishing Department, though of small dimensions is extremely interesting and valuable, and upon his observations and conclusions the present article is based.

But, as inevitably happens, it is the composer's practice always to anticipate the theoretical principles of a musical phenomenon, which he uses creatively and more or less freely without any help from musical theory. In the nineteenth century the composers most keenly sensitive to the spirit of Russian folk song were Musorgsky and Borodin. In our days we have Igor Stravinsky, who has given us in his 'Svadebka' ('Les Noces') a conception of the Russian folk song which should become the type for the first half of this century; and Kastalsky with his choral, mainly sacred, compositions, which owe their origin to his profound study of the principles of the Russian folk polyphony and are so definitely distinguished from the works of composers of other countries by their Russian national colouring.

I pass on now to a brief description of the peculiarities of the Russian national musical system as observed by Kastalsky, in the course of which I shall permit myself small excursions into the spheres of the folk music of other countries and the creative work of certain Russian and foreign composers, so far as such digressions are necessary to enliven the exposition of my subject.

One peculiarity of the Russian folk song is the employment of the natural major and minor diatonic scales, both in their pure form and

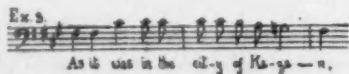
also with certain characteristic modifications. The natural minor scale is very often varied by the lowering of its second degree a semitone, as is seen in the following song of the Don Cossacks, quoted from Kastalsky :



The Russian folk song probably acquired this peculiarity from oriental music, in which the natural minor scale with a flattened second degree



is very common. Musorgsky used it very cleverly in 'Boris Godunov,' from which the next example is taken :



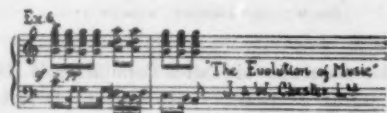
Similar instances are to be found in Saint-Saëns' 'Nuit Persane' (page 9) and in Stravinsky's 'Les Noces' :



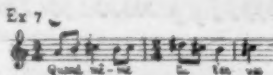
Another peculiarity of the Russian folk song, of which Musorgsky also makes striking use, is the introduction of a raised fourth degree into the major scale. Here is an example of a Ukraine melody, transcribed by Ilya Sats (quoted from Kastalsky) :



We meet with this raised fourth in the famous polonaise from 'Boris Godunov' (an instance which is noticed by Casella in his *Evolution of Music*)<sup>(1)</sup>:



and also in the middle of the 'Slava' chorus from the second tableau of the prologue to 'Boris.' The next quotation shows an application of this scale in 'Les Noce' :



Side by side with this major scale we have another, obtained by raising the sixth degree of the natural minor scale a semitone :



As we shall see further, this scale is in almost universal use. An example from Kastalsky :



shows its employment in a polyphonic Russian folk song. We find the same method of the raised sixth (further complicated by a flattened second) in the original version of the introduction to the second act of 'Boris Godunov' :



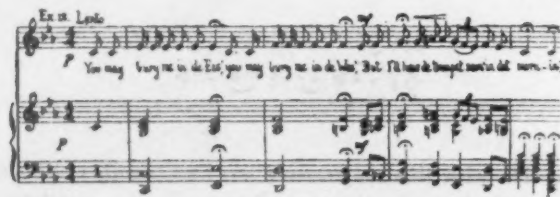
(1) J. & W. Chester, Ltd.



And again in 'Les Noces':



The raised sixth also occurs in 'Mélodies Populaires de Basse-Bretagne,' by Bourgault-Ducoudray ('Mona'); in Vincent D'Indy's 'Chansons Populaires du Vivarais' (Nos. 45 and 76); in Saint-Saëns' 'Nuit Persane' (pp. 8, 8 and 15); and even in negro songs, as will be seen from the following example, taken from H. E. Krehbiel's *Afro-American Folksongs* (page 86)<sup>(2)</sup>:



The flattened sixth in the natural major scale very seldom appears in Russian folk songs, but it was a favourite method of harmonising them in the second half of the nineteenth century, as a reference to the treatment of them by Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov and others will show. The following example from Kastalsky is evidence that the flattening of the sixth degree of the major scale involves the flattening of its third degree also (equivalent to the seventh of the subdominant chord-of-the-seventh and the 'blue note' in negro music):



Since the Russian folk song is based mainly on the natural major and minor scales, it is not surprising that most of the latter include a flattened seventh in place of a leading note. We have instances of this in Examples 1, 4, 9 and 11, which apply to Russian folk music in its original form and as elaborated by the composers to whom I have referred.

Having quoted a sufficient number of such examples and pointed

(2) G. Schirmer, Inc.

out the frequent use of this scale in oriental music and in the folk music of many European countries, I can now pass on to consider the last peculiarity (in respect of scale) of the Russian folk song, namely, the employment of the major scale with a flattened seventh, which, in Kastalsky's opinion, is analogous to the flattened second of the relative minor scale. Here is an example of a Russian song on this scale (from Kastalsky's book):



It is written on the following scale:



Instances of its use are to be found in Musorgsky (the 'Slava' chorus from the second tableau of the prologue to 'Boris Godunov'), as well as in the folk songs of various races, including the negroes, whose song 'A Great Camp Meetin' is cited on page 78 of Krehbiel's book—to which I have previously referred—as 'a fine example of the effect produced by the flattened seventh.'

Putting together all the divergencies from the generally accepted major and minor scales which are most often encountered in Russian folk music we get the following combination, representing both a major and a minor scale:

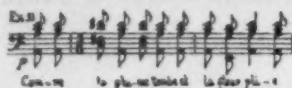


If we here add the flattened sixth in the major and the enharmonic-raised seventh in the relative minor, we shall have a fresh modification of the fundamental scales of Russian folk music.

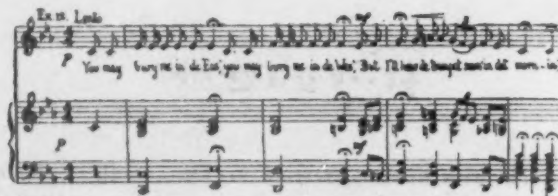
To conclude this brief survey of the peculiarities of these scales I would mention the use in Russian song of the augmented second—rather rare, it is true—which undoubtedly comes from the East and is widespread in South-East Europe and Western Asia, in Spain and amongst the Magyars, and is often found in Jewish synagogue tunes.

From instances quoted above it will be seen that the East has from

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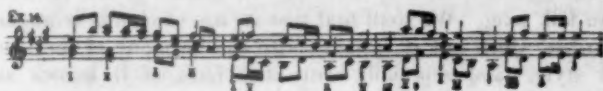


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(2) G. Schirmer, Inc.

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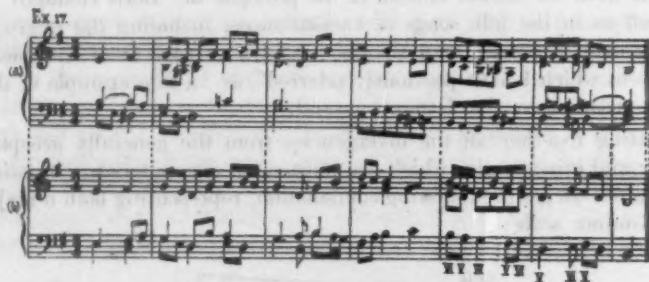
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From instances quoted above it will be seen that the East has from

very remote times exerted a powerful influence on the folk music of the Russian and other peoples, and this fact is made increasingly clear by contemporary investigators. An evidence of the antiquity of this folk music is the existence in it of the pentatonic scale—the so-called Chinese or Scottish scale—which has been discovered in the most distant corners of the globe.

We will now turn our attention to the very characteristic peculiarities of the harmony and the distribution of the parts in the Russian folk song. We shall find that its use of chords is marked by singularities which are at variance with the harmony of the so-called 'strict style,' and especially with that form of it known as the 'harmony of the schools'—a purely abstract product in the rigid sense of the term. Furthermore it differs from the harmony with which it was furnished by the composers belonging to the 'New Russian School' of the second half of the nineteenth century. To illustrate the difference between the folk harmonisation of the Russian national melodies and the harmonic elaborations of these composers I quote several examples of both, beginning with Glinka and ending with Lyadov:



This is a Russian folk song as harmonised (a) by Glinka (the famous 'Kamarinskaya') and (b) as it appears in the folk harmonisation. The former is brilliantly chromatic, whereas the latter (borrowed by Kastalsky from Palchikov's collection) contains a strictly diatonic harmony based on the characteristic alternation of the triads in a mutual relation of a second (the sixth and fifth degrees) and on the employment of unisons of the whole chorus at the beginning of the song and in the middle and final cadences. It is interesting to note that the final cadence brings the song to a unisonous close on the third degree of the scale.

In the next example we have a Russian folk melody as harmonised

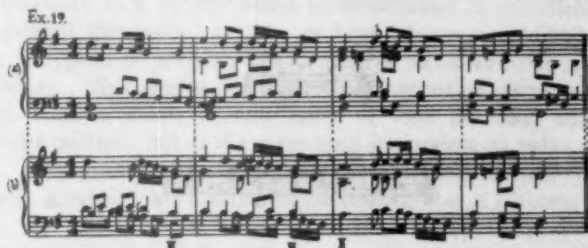


(a) by Musorgsky (from 'Khovanshchina') and (b) in the folk harmonisation (from Melgunov's collection):



Here we are first of all struck by the fact that Musorgsky has harmonised the melody in the harmonic minor, whereas in the folk harmonisation it is sung in the natural minor. As in the preceding example, the opening and the middle and final cadences are in unison. The bass, as is usual in the Russian folk harmonisation, is distinguished by its mobility. The dominant triad of the European harmonisation is here replaced by a triad constructed on the flattened seventh.

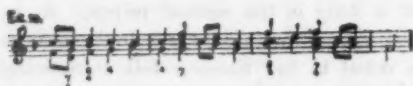
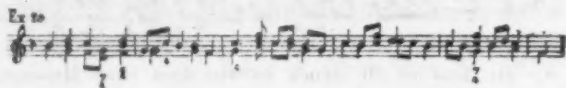
Our last example presents a melody as harmonised (a) by Anatoly Lyadov (from a collection of 35 Russian folk songs) and (b) in the folk harmonisation (published by Melgunov):



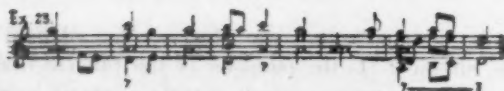
In the folk harmonisation we observe, in addition to the characteristic unisons: (1) the omission of the fundamental note of the tonic triad in the opening, which imparts a certain vagueness to the tonality; (2) the use of the fourth as a consonant interval; and (3) the modulation at the end of the song into the key of the dominant, effected by means of a triad on the flattened seventh of the new key, i.e., without the assistance of a leading note.

These three examples will suffice to show the vast divergence between the artificial and the natural harmonisation of the folk

melodies, based on a considerable difference in their principles. But whilst they are specimens of the strict Russian folk style, these examples do not give us a complete idea of the freedom permitted by the folk polyphony in the structure of chords and in other respects. Not only are fourths freely used, but chords of the fourth are employed; Arnold Schönberg, in his *Harmonielehre*,<sup>(3)</sup> is almost the first writer to deal with the latter. The following examples present a number of interesting harmonic combinations encountered in the Russian folk harmony:



Next we have illustrations of the employment and resolution of chords of the seventh in the Russian folk polyphony:

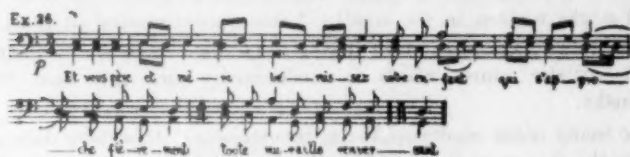


The last six quotations should give us some idea of the harmonic system of the Russian folk song, which, in Kastalsky's opinion, is qualified 'to interest even the modernist.'

But the peculiarities of the Russian folk song are not confined to its scales and its harmony; it is also extremely interesting as regards

(3) Universal Edition.

modulation and chromaticism, and there is even some connection between its chromatic harmonies and those of the Italian madrigalists of the sixteenth century—Marenzio, Monteverde, Gesualdo and others. This fact, in conjunction with the essentially vocal nature of the polyphony of the Russian folk song, is evidence that the art polyphony is directly descended from the folk polyphony, which to this day is able to provide composers with peculiar polyphonic effects, such as we see in the following excerpt from Stravinsky's 'Les Noces' (page 48):



A closer examination of this passage will reveal a number of peculiarities inherent in the genuine Russian folk polyphony.

Kastalsky studied the characteristics of the Russian folk harmony so shrewdly and profoundly that in his work he not only indicates them and reduces them to a system, but he also creates his own theory of harmony and modulation, analogous to the Russian folk style. Throughout he introduces parallel examples, showing how some fragment of a melody would be harmonised in accordance with the 'general European' system; or how a musician trained at one of the European or Russian Conservatoires would contrive a certain modulation. This makes his method of exposition extremely lucid (though from a purely literary point of view his book cannot be considered perfect), but at the same time it restricts its value to some extent, as a considerable portion is devoted to a statement of the principles governing his practice in the composition of his own, mainly choral, works. And in regard to this, though his system of harmonising Russian folk melodies is more consistent with the Russian folk style than are those of Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov and others, who developed Glinka's principles, it suffers from the fact that it is archaic and ignores the modern artistic resources at its disposal. In these days we cannot be satisfied with a mere return to the original folk harmony, however pure and correct that harmony may be from a historical point of view.

In this respect Stravinsky's 'Les Noces,' not to mention other works of his in a similar style, appears to be an almost ideal solution to this problem of the revival of the Russian folk polyphony under modern conditions; in any case it is not less ideal than the solution

put forward by Rimsky-Korsakov and others in the second half of the nineteenth century. In re-creating the Russian folk style as nearly as possible, Stravinsky makes use of the contemporary harmonic resources, which are far more flexible than the clumsy archaic expedients of the Russian folk harmony. Since the task of the ethnographer investigator differs entirely from that of the creator composer, and whereas a creative and not a theoretical comprehension of the ancient musical practice can alone advance the musical art, whilst remaining deeply grateful to Kastalsky for his study of the Russian folk polyphony and for his successful adaptation of it in his sacred works written in the smaller forms approximating to those of the folk music, we must nevertheless recognise a certain limitedness in his artistic aims, which is undoubtedly not the case with Stravinsky.

Like many other modern musical investigators, Kastalsky does not rely on the theory of the Greek modes to explain the scale and other modal peculiarities of Russian folk music; these he reduces to various modifications of the seventh degree natural major and minor scales. We cannot but approve of this methodological system, which facilitates his investigation of the phenomena by introducing a comprehensive generalisation. This is the more natural in that our major scale includes, of course, all the varieties of the Greek or Church modes, without doing violence to their real nature. Thanks to this, Kastalsky is quite able to discuss the sufficiently complex scale peculiarities of the Russian folk song without employing all the involved phraseology connected with the Greek modes.

I have already remarked on the similarity of the Russian folk polyphony to the contrapuntal system of the so-called strict style based, as we know, not on the vertical principle which underlies harmony, but on the principle of lineality, the result of horizontal musico-melodic thinking. Whence, then, comes this lineality which historically prepares the way for the days of vertical harmonic thinking? The Russian folk polyphony is perhaps better able than the folk song of other nations to answer this question, owing to its practice, often unexpected, of combining the voices in unison. This tendency to unison in the final cadence and at the beginning, and frequently in the middle, of a song, shows that polyphony owes its origin to the temporary breaking away of the second, third, and other parts from the unison of the principal tune to intervals harmonising with the melody. Thus the original form of any polyphony must be regarded as consisting of variants of the fundamental melody, sung simultaneously with it. These variants in the Russian folk song are called 'podgoloski,' i.e., episodic parts, subordinate to the principal melody. Gradually developing more and more freedom and boldness,

they end by supplying an independent polyphony, the theoretical basis of which consists in the observance of a difference of intervals between the singer of the principal melody and the other voices, and in the classification of the harmonies thus obtained into groups characteristic of this, that, or the other polyphony.

In passing from the sphere of the general laws governing the development of polyphony (from a single melodic line into a series of such horizontal lines) to the more limited field of the Russian folk polyphony, I should mention that, according to Kastalsky, the voices accompanying the principal melody are distributed on the trichordal principle, which in its turn proves to be a part of the pentatonic system, as is evident from the following notational scheme :



Here are shown all the trichordal melodic formations of the pentatonic scale, covering an octave and a half. I will not dwell upon the details of this phenomenon, but will content myself with pointing out that it testifies to the great antiquity of the Russian folk polyphony, if the latter is founded, not merely upon the pentatonic scale, which is older than the ancient Greek modes, but upon the trichordal system from which the pentatonic scale was built up.

The Russian folk music system, as I have said, was created under very powerful oriental influences, which in recent times, thanks to the wide diffusion of Russian art music, have enormously affected European music, by introducing into it the old original scales, whose peculiarities I have described. An acquaintance with Russian music has reminded European musical culture of the lost paradise of its oriental birthplace, which it has almost forgotten during the last eight or ten centuries. It has turned aside to cultivate its own harmonic principles, which it has developed to such an extent that the possibilities of our twelve-note harmonic system are nearly exhausted.

That the fundamental principles from which contemporary European music has been evolved may be developed on other lines is evident from the fact that all the national tendencies in music, though in the long run derived from the same source, differ profoundly from one another. Is it possible, for instance, to confuse the Spanish folk motif employed by Glinka in his 'Souvenir d'une Nuit d'été à Madrid' :





or by Ravel in his 'Rhapsodie Espagnole':



with even such a specimen of the Russian song in slow tempo as the chorus of villagers from Borodin's 'Prince Igor':



which expresses all the peculiarities of the Russian folk song with remarkable fidelity? And, as we know, amongst all the countries of Europe the folk music of Spain and Russia was pre-eminently affected by oriental influences. In the former we see the brilliant dance rhythms, with the characteristic accents on the weak parts of the bar; in the latter the breadth of melody, which seems to scorn the bar lines in its aspiration to pour out its lyrical feeling unrestrained.

This fact, i.e., the possibility of various artistic interpretations of one and the same principle, shows itself to be the motive power of musical progress. Thanks to it, the influence of one nation upon another always has the effect of advancing one step further the creative musical art of the world. The great influence of Russian music on that of the contemporary world is beyond dispute. Nor can there be any doubt as to the value of such theoretical works on Russian music as Kastalsky's *Peculiarities of the Russian Folk-music System*, which establishes by the experimental method the principles underlying Russian music as a branch of national art. And the more we have of such studies of the folk music of different countries, the more profoundly we shall understand the character and peculiarities of their art music, as well as the real nature of the fundamental principles on which the musico-creative work of man has rested from the very earliest stages of its development, on which it still rests and will continue to rest.

VICTOR BELAIEV.  
Trans. by S. W. PRING.

Moscow, January 10-24, 1928.

## PITY THE POOR PERFORMER !

It may be as well to make clear at the outset that this is neither a plea for the inefficient player nor an appeal on behalf of the impoverished one, but is an attempt to put before composers the claims to consideration of performers in general.

That a performer should stand in need of pity may be a new idea to some, but a study of modern music will show that much of it, however fine and beautiful it may be on paper, is written with little or no realisation of the capacities of the various instruments or voices with which it deals. I do not refer to acknowledged masterpieces, either ancient or modern, nor to that great mass of new dance tunes, theatre music and ballads, with which it seems impossible to keep pace and about which no one permanently cares whether it is playable or not; as a matter of fact, both trash and masterpiece often share the merit of being supremely adapted to the instrument for which they are written. I am referring to that large body of serious music which, while not being 'great,' has yet thought and genuine inspiration behind it and which enlarges our musical horizon, even if only to a limited extent.

A good deal of this music does not sufficiently consider individual instrumental capacities. It is not so much a question of technique, though that aspect cannot be neglected; it is more a matter of what I may term effectiveness. The accepted theory is that the performer's technique must adapt itself to the composer's requirements and that unless the composer writes ahead of the technique of his day, that technique will never expand. This theory is eminently sound and such expansion must take place, and will take place, but on one condition: that greater effectiveness is thereby attained. Effectiveness must not be confused with showiness; I use the term to cover any effect of which the instrument concerned is peculiarly capable. No performer will grudge days and weeks of work on any single phrase if at the end he can feel that he is able to give expression to what the composer is asking of him, but if the music when learnt yet remains inherently ineffective, he is bound to feel a sense of wasted effort and in the end to give up the hopeless task.

The Germans speak of certain music as being *dankbar*, or grateful; after you have given it much toil and time, it repays you by becoming a sheer joy to play, and it is this quality which constitutes effectiveness and in which I think some modern music is so sadly lacking.

It is, of course, far easier to point out the absence of such a quality than to show how its presence may be obtained and indeed to define effectiveness with any approach to completeness would be an almost

impossible thing to do. All I mean to attempt in this paper is to consider certain points that contribute towards it, and to say how I think such points can best be borne in mind.

It is easier to attack the position in the rear, and I shall first deal with one or two cases of ineffectiveness which may at least help us to obtain a negative definition.

A great source of ineffectiveness is the fact that far too little thought is given to the difference between chamber music and large-scale music. Just as a picture is often not properly seen except from a distance of several feet, so much music is only properly heard from a distance of several yards. Effects of this kind are perfectly legitimate in their place, that is, in orchestral or choral works or even in some types of solo-writing, but when they occur in string quartets or trios or in chamber works with pianoforte they defeat their own ends. No small ensemble sounds at its best in a large hall, and when the music written for it does not come off in a small one, then the result is inevitably unsatisfactory.

It may be as well here to give an example of the kind of effect that only sounds well in a large hall. Such is a cantabile violin passage written in the highest part of the instrument, remaining up there for many bars, and marked *ff*. In such a passage you are bound to hear the whirr of the bow on the strings, as the amount of tone produced is not enough to hide it. The louder the passage is played, the more the whirr increases and while a good player will naturally make less of this difficulty than a bad one, the best player in the world cannot overcome it entirely. In a big hall the tone will carry and the whirr be lost, but in a room, and this is the test for chamber music, the whirr will carry as far as the tone.<sup>(1)</sup>

This same kind of passage may be used to typify another form of ineffective writing, the cause of which is ignorance or disregard of effective range, songs particularly being too often written with regard to the singer's actual compass and not to his or her most effective notes. Composers, in writing climaxes, should consider which notes are of greatest effect in the particular voice or instrument for which they are writing and should remember that these are not necessarily the highest notes. A high cantabile violin passage, such as I have already mentioned, is ineffective if placed, as it so often is, at a climax, for the quality of the violin becomes ethereal and almost mystical in the upper registers and the rich full tone necessary for a climax is quite unattainable. Flutes, on the other hand, gain in power as they climb; yet still composers persist in writing remote

(1) Kodaly, in his sonata for solo cello, has an extraordinary passage; it is played very high up on the C string, tremolando. In this case the whirr is plainly meant to be heard and gives a peculiar ghostly colouring to the already hollow tone of the upper C string.

mystical passages for high flutes and passionate climaxes for high violins.

These things are ineffective and all the practice in eternity could not make them otherwise.

In attacking the question from the other side and trying to define the positive quality of effectiveness as far as we may, let no one neglect the physical aspect. Every performer derives from his work a double pleasure: there is the æsthetic effect which through the ear reaches the mind and involves deep questions of artistic and spiritual values with which, at the moment, I have nothing to do; and there is the purely physical pleasure that comes from fingering a comfortable passage or singing a satisfactory note. These two sensations are in a very high degree interdependent, as may easily be proved. The following two passages from Brahms's variations on a theme by Handel are both supremely delightful for a pianist to play:—



If, however, either is played an octave lower, where the aural effect is bad, the physical pleasure becomes almost non-existent. The relationship between aural and physical pleasure is so close as to make the physical sensation an accurate barometer, if I may so express it, and one may safely say that it is in so far as that physical pleasure is attained that any given piece of music will prove to be supremely adapted to its chosen medium.

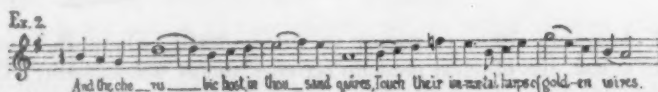
The essential of such music, if instrumental, is that it should lie 'under the hands' and this may be more narrowly defined as meaning music where the phrasing follows the natural fingering. When the hand is laid on any instrument it is naturally easier to play some fingers than others. Practice neutralises this and theoretically our fingers become of almost equal value. Nevertheless, some fingering is always instinctive and other fingering is always acquired, and a passage that lies under the hands is one where the phrases fit the instinctive fingering. Therefore certain chords and certain figures

are peculiarly adapted to the piano because they fit the position of the hand on the piano, while other combinations of notes fit a different position and are, as the Elizabethans would have said, 'apt for viols.' In the case of string music, moreover, the effectiveness of the phrase depends also on the manipulation of the bow, for as with fingering, so with bowing; certain things are easy, almost instinctive, to do, and others are acquired. The expert violinist has probably himself forgotten which is which, but the effective phrase is one which acknowledges these conditions and adapts itself to them.

So much for the instrumental side; let us now consider vocal music and what it is that gives to the singer his pleasure and to his audience their effect.

An effective note in singing is one where the vowel sung falls in that part of the voice best adapted for that vowel and where that vowel is preceded by a consonant that helps to produce that note. Some voices will prefer to sing 'O' high, while others will find it easier to sing it on a low note. Again, certain consonants help high notes and others help low notes and these also vary according to the type of voice. Each kind of voice has its own peculiar characteristics and it is of no use to write for bass, or even tenor, as if it were merely a transposed soprano.

A good vocal phrase is one which contains individual effective notes, which employs those intervals grateful to the voice, which moves in curves and avoids sudden wide drops or leaps for one note only, and which does not neglect the singing of two or more notes to one syllable. The following short quotation from 'Blest Pair of Sirens' by Parry is a very good example:



This phrase and its context form one of the most singable passages in music, and the whole work is remarkable for that physical pleasure to which I have referred. It is in eight parts and every singer in any choir will confess to enjoying every note of his or her part.

In the case of solo singing one other factor must be taken into account. The truly effective vocal phrase depends, for its shape and its length, on the fact that every living creature, after breathing out for a certain length of time, must, of necessity, breathe in again.

This applies also to music for wind instruments in which, of course, the control of the breath is the supreme consideration though the careful composer should consider also the fingers and the tongue.

It may seem to some that if the composer is to make such a detailed



study of what makes for effectiveness, the result will be impossibly mechanical writing.

'Must I,' cries the despairing composer, 'must I, then, in writing for an instrument, consider the fingers only, and hope that by the time I have written a really comfortable physical exercise a heaven-born melody will be found to lie therein? Must I, when writing a song, pick out all the syllables suitable for high notes (with the additional strain of considering whether they should be high because of the vowel or low because of the consonant), and having made up my mind about it, put in all the high notes and all the low notes and then join these with phrases carefully cut on the pattern of two notes to each syllable and moving in curves?'

Heaven forbid! Such a procedure would not lead to composition at all, but merely to a debased form of crossword puzzle. Mechanical consideration of this kind would itself be ineffective. What the composer should aim at is something completely different which would make such consideration quite unnecessary. He should endeavour to think, naturally and inevitably, in terms of any voice or instrument for which he may write.

It is an obvious and generally acknowledged fact that to write in French, or any foreign language, one must be able to think in that language, but it is not so generally realised that the same thing applies to music and that, to write for the violin one should think in the violin's own particular idiom. The string player, for instance, only uses four fingers, and any passage that is thought out in terms of five fingers will not be a fiddle passage.

The habit of thinking easily in many different musical languages is one of the hardest tasks that the composer has to set himself. It is always easy to tell when a man is writing for his own instrument. Nearly all composers are pianists in varying degrees and nearly all composers can think in terms of the piano, but in order to attain the power of thinking in other instruments, those other instruments must be learnt.

The counsel of perfection is to play all instruments; though it is, of course, impossible to sing in every kind of voice. In any case, the composer should learn as many as he can and at least one of each orchestral group—that is, if he wishes to write for orchestra. A little knowledge may be a dangerous thing, but it will in this case be a great deal better than none at all. Even after a few lessons, he will begin to know the actual 'feel' of the instrument and this will help him more than any amount of technical knowledge.

Then the composer should play *with* various instruments, should do this often and with the same people, and should discuss the music and hear what the other players say about it; in time he will begin to

know from the very look of a passage whether it is effective or not. He should sing whenever and wherever he can. If his voice is not admired by his immediate circle, at least let him sing in the bath, the singer's sanctuary. If he sings passages from various songs and choral works, he will find presently that some things suit his voice, even such as it may be, better than others and the songs he writes will begin to be vocal. Lastly, he should never cease to read music; not playing it on the piano, for that is the equivalent of translating the foreign tongue, but reading it silently until the varying styles of different instruments become familiar to him as his own.

In conclusion, I should like to make two points clear.

First, it is important to remember that the finest musical thought, if ineffectively written for its medium, inevitably loses some of its power. A passage that is *dankbar* carries its musical meaning so bound up with the physical movements that the more it is practised the clearer that meaning becomes, till, when the passage is perfectly known by the fingers, the musical content is plain to the mind of hearer and player; in an awkwardly written passage the technical and interpretative aspects are divided and the player has to concentrate half his attention on the actual playing of the notes quite apart from conveying their æsthetic values. On the other hand, effectiveness by itself is never truly *dankbar*; unless music has some real artistic importance it will not give the right kind of performer any pleasure to play. It is therefore useless to make effectiveness an end in itself. If, however, the composer is thinking in terms of his medium, he can aim at abstract beauty and his music will be effective in spite of him.

My second point is this. The composer is, in the last resort, entirely and utterly dependent on the performer. A few choice spirits can find as much pleasure in reading a score as in hearing it played, but these are rare and the composer writes for more than them. All art is a form of communication and for that communication the composer is as dependent on his performers as the artist on his colours. If a composer writes music that is unpleasant to play, no matter how much good it may contain, then it may be played once to please him and again, perhaps, to please his friends and following, but never to please the players. But if he writes something that is delightful to play, then, in spite of any weaknesses that there may be, it will continue perhaps for generations to be played or sung in all 'places where they sing' or play.

If music is to stand, if it is to be heard, if it is to have any existence however brief, it must be sincere, and it must follow beauty according to its lights; but it must besides be so written that we may rejoice in its performance and strive to become its privileged performers.

DOROTHY ERHART.

## THE MUSICAL FESTIVAL AND THE COMPETITION CHOIR

'SOONER or later it was bound to happen,' I said to myself, when the conductor of a choir that has usually done well at festival competitions came to me and said 'I won't go in for any more. The judge was unfair. He was either incompetent or listless. All my people saw it, and they are embittered beyond description. They say they don't mind "going down," but they are hanged if they are "going down" to choirs that have eloquently demonstrated themselves inferior in every way.'

Our rules have made it unsportsmanlike to squeal when we are beaten, but remembering that nothing, after all, is more natural, I put on the judicial robes and examined first the obvious possibility that here was a disappointed competitor whose cominient was the measure of his disappointment. I know my friend well, and I examined him, and I decided I could exclude that possibility. He probably had a just grievance, and I sympathised with him. I have had one myself, now and again.

The question of adjudication is more important than festival committees think. A palpably wrong decision will choke endeavour and threaten the movement in a particular centre far more than would the chilliness of sparse audiences, or the fewness of entrants or many other minor detractions that promoters elevate into bugbears. The margin of error in the best of conditions, with a good judge and good machinery, will always be quite wide enough to cause broken hearts here and there before we have even begun to take risks. That margin cannot be eliminated. Decide, then, not to add to it.

The problem is first a festival committee's problem, solved by the careful choice of judges and by intelligent staff work. It is then a judges' problem, and the major responsibility, of course, rests with them.

I have noticed that really reputable musicians are not unwilling to act as adjudicators, that, indeed, they require but little coaxing from their rocky fastnesses to make a journey of  $x$  miles to a country town and there to officiate for perhaps three or four days. I have noticed that all of them, without exception, pay tribute to the festival movement, and I have concluded, not too cleverly perhaps, that there is some dim concern of bread and butter about it. Well, quite right.

Why not, so long as they apprehend that they are walking a tight-rope and are content to leave the elephant uncarried? Why not, so long as they abjure the more sensational tricks and don't fall? But it is a business of intense concentration, and some of us are happier if we see judges sitting in pairs, the one acting trapeze to the other, as it were. Now and again we might be satisfied with only one, if that one were, for instance, such a person as Steuart Wilson. I do not know whether Steuart Wilson adjudicates, but I instance him to show what I mean, a stamp—the stamp that combines with a thorough knowledge of singing a general culture and a broadminded musicianship with no nonsense about it. I think there aren't many of him, though.

Adjudication is inclined to be slack, or incompetent, or both. I have witnessed the award of the palm to a choir that sang in Cockney vowels throughout, without that disability being so much as referred to in the adjudication. I have heard a choir waste itself upon good diction and subtleties of phrasing which, according to the judge's mark-sheet, did not even succeed in attracting his notice. Of a well-known madrigal there are two conflicting editions. The festival committee selected edition A. The choir most highly commended were apparently honoured because they sang it like edition B. Perhaps B was the better. Perhaps the judge liked it better. But B was not before the candidates. The rules of the game must be regarded, or unsuccessful choirs may have sourness added to disappointment. I have watched a judge reading a piece most carefully, bar by bar, as he was judging it, and, by the points he missed as was evident by his after remarks, I decided he couldn't possibly have known the work. Surely the minimum requirement of a judge is that he should come into the tribunal having thoroughly studied the test piece beforehand.

It is little realised by committees what a competing choir sacrifices to become an entrant. An experienced and able body of singers who could take the competition pieces in their stride, so to say, are not the sort of choir that need enter festival competitions, or, in fact, do enter often. The sort that constitutes your average competitor is the slow-learning, hard-working, plodding type, whose every tiny achievement is won by wearily repeated effort, aided, perhaps, by a flame of spluttering enthusiasm madly and breathlessly fanned by a conductor that never despairs. And, in passing, let me peevishly observe that against such average material there does sometimes happen to slip into the arena a choir possessed of real voices, whom the adjudicator as often as not promptly pounces upon, compliments on their 'tone' and awards first place. They that would invite entrants should bear in mind that the majority of eligible choirs must devote the greater part of their choir-year to the attainment of a reasonable level

of performance in the test pieces to the exclusion of much else that might tempt them, much that would be fun to them, much that answers more closely to the collective musical spirit than the advent of a festival, however important we may tell each other the festival is.

So let me propose that promoters owe their invitees faithfulness, friendliness and a fair deal. Which, being translated, means :—

(1) Faithfulness. The specification of the test piece—edition, key and so on—should be unequivocal. It should be stated whether it is proposed to hear a part or the whole, and that intention should be rigidly adhered to in the event. The rules or conditions or whatever they may be called, governing entries, should be stated in clear language and leave no room for doubt concerning, for instance, how small or how large a choir is permitted, whether there is adequate room on the platform for the number accepted; whether there is any kind of perch for the conductor; whether a music-stand is provided for him, or does the poor brute bring his own; whether there are choir tiers, so that, if there mayn't be, the conductor shall have the opportunity at rehearsals to redispense his forces, ordering their successive ranks according to the stature of individuals.

Well do I remember my first considerable festival. My choir and I were ushered on to a perfectly flat platform—the same plane for everybody—which was so small that the singers could hardly breathe, important leaders could not see the conductor from first to last, and the front and side lines 'held' the extreme edges of the platform with difficulty. 'Don't want a music-stand, do you?' an impatient official's voice whispered at my elbow. Before I could answer, the judge rang his bell and impatiently added 'Sing.'

Keep your time-table. Don't leave your candidates waiting about bewildered. They have their 'nerves.' Don't bully them, saying the adjudicator is being kept waiting. Let him wait. Alternatively, don't say that the adjudicator can't cope with the number of competitors and must only part hear some as he has a train to catch. Let him miss it. The adjudicator is the only person that is being paid a fee. Let him earn it, and pay him more if he works overtime. Keep your competitors in countenance at all costs; that is the main thing. You want them again. Ye have the adjudicators always with you.

(2) Friendliness. This is the opportunity for good staff work. The organising secretary should be good tempered and a competent person of affairs. If he is, he won't surround himself with more work than he can do; he will call out betimes for assistance. He must be warm and human and reflect a sense of the jolliness of it all. He must strive not to be officious; he must even strive not to appear like an organis-



ing secretary. He must conduct all the correspondence preliminary to the festival in a light-hearted, colloquial way, shunning alike the impertinent omniscience of the income tax inspector, and the formal attitude of the 'humble servant,' which last people are apt to interpret as the putting on of airs. He should cultivate that special quality that causes each competitor to think it was very good of him to come, and that through him and his like the festival has been made possible.

The day having arrived, a sufficient supply of readily identifiable stewards, known of the people preferably, should be early upon the scene, thoroughly instructed in the outlines of what is to take place and charged with their separate, if interchangeable, duties.

Beware of the dominance, if you be fool enough to allow it, of the local 'pi-jaw' who, because he is very fat, or very tall, or very benign, or wears a monocle, at once takes charge of your hall and struts about from place to place making all the announcements, doing all the talking (and far too much of it), flattering the judges, patronising the winners of honours, and shooing everybody and everything everywhere and back again. This is the evil genius of your festival. Keep him out. No matter how fat, how tall, how benign or of how many monocles; keep him out. He will spoil your day. He is the incarnation of the anti-festival, anti-musical spirit. He is totally unmusical and has probably read Ruskin on music. He is clearly not one of you. People say 'Oh shut up' under their breaths and, while your day is still young, he is already the Universal Resentment. He may, of course, be a woman, but beware of him in either sex and scotch him, or he will scotch you.

Don't commiserate with the losers. They are often sensitive—and intelligent. Rather concentrate upon what a lark it all is.

(3) A fair deal. This chiefly concerns judges, and with some temerity is addressed to them.

Study your works thoroughly if they are not already familiar to you.

Note obvious effects that any fool ought to make if he has thought at all. Note those that are less obvious and mark their observance higher than the first.

Give due credit for those so unobvious that they may have escaped your own prevision, provided that your musicianship can accept them.

Don't go into ecstasies over a choir of solo voices simply, while scarcely heeding another that may offer you careful workmanship and artistic interpretation. What is played upon the instrument is more important than the instrument.

Try not to miss anything. Show unsuccessful competitors that you

have noticed what they are *trying* to do. Be charitable to those that apparently don't try to do anything, but stop short at 'buttering them up.'

Before you leave your seat to go on to the platform add up your marks very carefully to make sure that the choir which in your mind you have already decided to declare the best shall have the highest *total* of marks. If you don't, arithmetic will be your master and you will be obliged to award the honour to the choir whose detail marks, to your astonishment, add up to more than the actual winner's.

If you are not skilled in vocal technique have an assistant. Leave to him the breathing periods and the diction and the general management—there is much in it—of the language unit. Even if you *are* so skilled, such a division of labour will still leave you plenty to adjudicate upon.

If the work is a modern one and the composer has indicated the tempo, conductors should be discouraged from playing ducks and drakes with it, or too many ducks and drakes, shall we say?

At the end of a choir's singing give yourself a few silent seconds to glance quickly back upon the whole picture they have tried to present to you. It may have been unusual, but it may have been architecture.

The competitors standing before you are often earnest students and may see a thing differently from you. Grant them some licence in interpretation. What one man sees as sedate chicken another may make game of. One man's meat is another man's *poisson*.

Resist, if you possibly can, the temptation to conduct winning choirs at the ensuing concert. Isn't the interesting thing to the public not your interpretation but how the choirs sang when they won? If you must conduct, do so only after a patient rehearsal at which each choir shall be sure it understands you. A judge conducted a choir of mine and, for a pianissimo effect, almost threw himself at the singers. The choir were not accustomed to being asked for that particular tone in that particular way, and the effect went wrong.

T. B. LAWRENCE

## LOUD SPEAKERS

No matter how perfectly the ether waves radiated from a broadcasting station have been shaped to the form of the sound waves whose impress they are to carry, or how accurately this form has been impressed on the disc of a gramophone record; no matter, in either case, with how little distortion the electric amplifier fulfills its purpose of magnifying the minute impulses from the receiving aerial in the one case or the electrical gramophone pick-up in the other; the sound which will be heard is ultimately produced by the loud speaker which translates electrical variations into air vibrations, and unless it performs its translation with complete literalness, the work of the performer, of the broadcasting or gramophone engineer, and of the designer of the amplifier, will be by so much thrown away. What is heard by the listener will not be what was produced by the performer.

Two points I wish to make here before going on to speak of loud speakers themselves. First, no loud speaker can give true reproduction if any of the links before it is imperfect. It will not correct a faulty performer, nor a distorted transmission or a bad record. Neither will it make up for a bad wireless set or amplifier. Hence no loud speaker should be judged by connecting it to any but the most perfect amplifier obtainable, and the degree of perfection can be measured with instruments and is not therefore left to taste or chance. Secondly, the designer of loud speakers who seeks truth, not profits, endeavours to give 'what was produced by the performer.' The purchaser so often prefers something that is not the truth. He—or more often she—does so love something that sounds 'mellow.' If a piano can be turned into a celeste and a cornet into an organ pipe the loud speaker that does it is chosen for preference.

Again, one loud speaker responds best over the lower range of sound, another over the higher. The former will appeal to the person who loves richness, the other to those who never hear anything but what they would call the tune, when listening to concerted music. The musician will find both lacking. Thus, among imperfect reproducers, selection will be a matter of taste and this will even be so in some cases when the choice is between the perfect and the imperfect.

The loud speaker is a converter of energy from electrical to sound form; it is fed with alternating electric currents and produces alternating pulses of air. The problem is to make it do this with equal

efficiency for frequencies of vibration varying from about thirty to about ten thousand per second, and further, to have some regard to what has led up to the actual frequency with which it is dealing at the moment. Quite apart from the difficulty of designing the electrical part to have equal efficiency over so wide a range, the mechanical moving part or parts will have certain natural periods of resonance and will therefore respond abnormally to certain notes and the electrical circuits exhibit similar resonances. Special types of loud speaker have other inherent troubles and the problem looked at theoretically is so hideously complicated and difficult that it is astonishing to find how far towards a practical solution designers have contrived to go.

The telephone ear-piece receiver being a commonplace when broadcasting began, the obvious thing to do was to fit it with a trumpet with a view to rendering the sound audible at a little distance and at the same time to build it on a larger scale so that it could be fed with rather more energy without being overloaded. This was the basis of the hundreds of trumpet type loud speakers which held the field for some years. They varied in badness, but this did not greatly matter because the radio receivers and amplifiers were also so bad that the combination might tend to cancel out the worst features of either. For example, resonances in the receiver and in the loud speaker would probably occur at different frequencies so that the mountains were brought low and the valleys partially filled up. The trumpet also muffled things and muddled things and the general result was a confused noise which the long-suffering human ear translated into something sufficiently suggestive of the original. A perfect loud speaker connected to one of these receivers—and there are thousands such still in existence—would probably have been unbearable.

Trumpets, unless of great length, completely suppress low notes. The average domestic loud speaker with trumpet cuts off everything below middle C. It is difficult to believe this until it is realised that if the human ear is presented with a series of higher harmonics which it has been accustomed to associate with a particular fundamental, the brain will supply the fundamental much, presumably, as a scent may call up a memory. Hence the brain is remembering the fundamentals which are not there and probably also the passages for deep toned instruments, until one listens with a score, whereupon these last astonishingly disappear. Drums, being too forcible to hear when they are not there—if this remark may pass in the attempt to express the confusion and illusion which are being discussed—are very definitely missed.

The first move away from the trumpet was to attach the same old

telephone earpiece to the centre of a large diaphragm of paper, capable of moving a considerable volume of air without being coupled up through a funnel. An early type had a flat diaphragm, stiffened by pleating and held rigidly round the edge, as was the original small diaphragm of the earpiece type. The instrument had better bass reproduction and a pleasing mellow tone after the harshness of the earlier patterns, but it soon gave place to conical diaphragms with free or lightly held edges. These, with better magnetic movements to drive them, carried the art a long way forward and, when used with the very much better amplifiers which had been developed, began to give a very fair impression in miniature of all the instruments in an orchestra, although the lower register was still weak and those high frequencies which give the characteristic timbre of various instruments were lacking, so that the high notes of fiddle, flute or oboe tended to sound alike.

Leaving aside various interesting speakers which did not get far beyond the laboratories or are of so costly a nature that they are only used for quite special purposes, the next development of note was the moving coil instrument using a small paper cone and a baffle. The substitution of a small coil moving in a strong magnetic field for the earlier reed and magnet as a means of driving the cone is a question of electrical technique and need not be discussed here; it was not, moreover, a novel principle. The substitution of a small cone and a baffle for the large cone is, however, acoustically interesting. Hitherto it had been considered that the larger the cone the deeper the notes that could be produced, but the size of the cone could not be increased indefinitely as the increased mass to be driven involved a heavy electrical movement which could not respond to the high frequencies. Also it was difficult to make a large and light cone sufficiently stiff to move as a whole. It was found, however, that the reason a small cone would not radiate deep notes was due to the fact that when it was moving relatively slowly and producing an air pressure on one face and a corresponding reduced pressure of air on the other, the air displaced on the one side merely slipped round the edge to fill up the rarer space there and a sound wave was not formed. By providing a baffle or screen of a size commensurate with the wave length of the sound to be radiated, with a hole in the centre the size of the cone, and putting this up against the cone, the slipping round the edge was prevented and the deep notes became audible. It is an easy and remarkable experiment, to remove the baffle from a moving coil type of loud speaker and see how immediately all the bass is lost.

Even with speakers having fairly large cones the use of a baffle is most desirable and this should be not less than three feet square. The common practice of putting speakers in some kind of box is to be



avoided. It has the effect of producing a false depth of tone due to the resonances of the box itself. A loud speaker fitted to a baffle should stand away from walls and should be absolutely open at the back. To understand why, try the effect of talking whilst walking into a corner of a room, and observe the booming effect of resonance when within about one foot of the corner. The ideal loud speaker should be entirely free of resonance and should reproduce all audible frequencies equally without adventitious aids.

The baffled moving coil instruments certainly produced deep notes and gave a massive tone previously unequalled, but in general they failed with the high frequencies and this was perhaps most readily observable to the ordinary listener on speech, which was distinctly boomy. The instrument is probably unsurpassed for reproducing organ music where the notes are formed without any sudden attack, but the brilliant colour of orchestral instruments is due to certain transients, or vibrations of high frequency which rapidly die out before the steady note is produced, and a loud speaker must deal faithfully with these before it can be considered to approach perfection. This aspect of the problem has recently been attacked and a large measure of success has been achieved by designing a reed movement which responds over readily to these transients and which, when loaded with a paper cone of suitable dimensions, settles down to the required true balance over a very great range of frequencies. Such an instrument, properly mounted in a baffle and driven by a carefully designed amplifier, will produce music sufficiently near to the original to give real pleasure to professional musical critics, which is saying something of a mouthful. It has been given to comparatively few to hear apparatus of this kind, but those who have done so realise that broadcasting, and even the gramophone, have got to be treated as serious musical arrivals which are likely to have a profound effect upon both listeners and musicians in the near future.

H. R. RIVERS-MOORE.

## REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

THE following list contains a selection of recent books on music. Unless otherwise stated, the year of publication is 1929. All prices quoted are net, and in the case of foreign books the price given is that at which the cheapest edition can be purchased in the country in which the book is published. At the present rates of exchange (Aug. 16), ten dollars=£2 1s. 4d.; ten French francs=1s. 7½d.; ten Swiss francs=7s. 11d.; ten German marks=9s. 10d.; ten Austrian shillings=5s. 9½d.; ten Italian lire=2s. 2d.; ten Spanish pesetas=6s.; ten Dutch florins=16s. 6d.; and ten Danish kroner=10s. 11d.

**American Music.** Edwards, G. T.: *Music and Musicians of Maine*. Southworth Press: Portland, Maine, 1928. 75. 50.

**Appreciation.** Winn, Cyril: *Music for All*. pp. 80. Routledge. 6d.

**Bach.** *Bach-Jahrbuch*. Herausgegeben von Arnold Schering. Jahrg. 25, 1928. pp. iii. 176. Breitkopf. 7 M. 50.

Hull, A. Eaglefield: *Bach's Organ Works*. With a complete list of arrangements of the organ works for pianoforte and other instruments by Harold T. Scull. pp. 189. 'Musical Opinion.' 5/-

Neue Bach-Gesellschaft . . . *Siebzigstes Deutsches Bachfest*. Leipzig. Vom 8. bis 10. Juni, 1929. pp. 112. Breitkopf. 3 M.

Terry, C. Sanford: *The Four Part Chorals of J. S. Bach*. With the German text of the hymns and English translation. Edited, with an historical introduction, notes and critical appendices, by C. S. Terry. pp. xii. 539. Oxford University Press. 84/-.

**Beethoven.** Herriot, E.: *La Vie de Beethoven*. pp. 455. Nouvelle Revue Française. 13 fr. 50. [Vies des hommes illustres.]

Hinjos, J. de: *Beethoven*. Sugestiones. Impr. Moderna: Cáceres, 1928. 10 ptas.

Rolland, R.: *Beethoven*. Les grandes époques créatrices. illus. pp. 400. Éditions du Sablier: Paris. 32 fr. [Cheap edition, in one volume.]

Volbach, F.: *Beethoven*. 2. Auflage. illus. pp. iv. 128. Kirchheim & Co.: Mainz. 6 M.

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Fellerer, K. G.: *Die Musikalischen Schätze der Santinischen Sammlung*. Führer durch die Ausstellung der Universitäts-Bibliothek Münster. pp. 32. Universitäts-Bibliothek Münster: Münster i. Westf. 30 pf.

**Biography.** Isaacson, C. D.: *Face to Face with Great Musicians*. 2 vol. Appleton: London. 3s. 6d. each.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Natural technics in piano mastery.* By Jacob Eisenberg. W. Reeves. 7s. 6d. net.

This is not the usual pianoforte primer, with pet theories and anatomical horrors. It keeps steadily in view the purpose with which the piano is played by the wise—to make music. It gives advice, certainly, about the technical use of the limbs, but only because nothing which conduces to an intelligent reading is without interest. The main object of the pianist should be to understand his music. He will do that best when he likes it, and all pianists are delightfully different in their likes. They are to be studied as individuals; you may make out of a dahlia a better dahlia, but you can't make a rose, he says, and it would not be a very good thing if you could. The book is very sound on relaxation as the condition of good work, on phrasing, and on the use of what it aptly calls the 'magnifying' pedal. Its defect is a certain wordiness, and the printer has not made quite the best use of his type.

*Lorenzo da Ponte, Memoirs.* Trans., with introduction and notes, by L. A. Sheppard. Routledge. 15s. net.

'Mozart's Librettist,' we all instinctively add as a sub-heading; but the hopes with which we open the book suffer defeat. No fresh light is thrown on Mozart, or even on the librettos of 'Figaro,' 'Don Giovanni,' or 'Cosi fan tutte.' Such interest as we may find in the book is limited to the observation of a man unburdened by scruples enjoying those pleasures of life which are dissociated from ethics. There is also the minor interest that the story da Ponte has to tell in America in the eighteen-thirties and the story as it appears in the Venetian archives for 1777 are entirely discrepant. A third interest lies in the prodigious conceit of the man; he is proud of the music of 'Don Giovanni,' but far prouder of the words, which contain, though he does not say so, his autobiography. The book is decidedly well written, and is admirably translated.

A. H. F. S.

*The Elizabethan Jig and related song drama.* By Charles Read Baskervill. The University of Chicago Press. 22s. 6d. net.

There is no aspect of the jig which the author of this large book does not exhaustively explore except the musical. The jig here discussed is something of larger scope than the dance familiar to musicians in the suites of the eighteenth century. The author shows that the jig had a literary form of much greater importance than the dance-measure which was one of its accompaniments. The jig was one of the minor dramatic forms elaborated by strollers and players in their representations of folk tales and ballads. These folk dramas were spoken probably to the accompaniment of song and dance. What we now call the gigue (in triple time) was not the only dance used; corantos,



lavoltas, galliards and many other of the suite forms were drawn upon. 'The stage jig combined three arts in which the Elizabethans delighted and excelled—drama, music and dance.' There is evidence that these jigs were mainly of a humorous nature, and it is probable that the dance which was most clearly imbued with a spirit of gaiety—the jig with its light, skipping step, easier for the common people to compass than the galliard or the coranto—came to be looked on as the embodiment of the larger jig, the folk drama, and eventually took the name of the main drama itself. The texts of English and foreign jigs printed at the end of this volume plainly show the preponderance of a humorous element in their composition. The author of this study has unfortunately left the purely musical side of the jig's history in a much less finished state than the dramatic and choreographic. He describes many of the dance-forms employed in the stage jig, but omits to provide information as to their time-signatures—common-time dances were frequent in the stage jig. When the triple-time gigue, as we now know it, first came into use is not clear. One fact about this book lightens its rather heavy reading and makes us the author's debtor. This is the description of Richard Tarlton, one of the earliest professional clowns, who was quick-witted enough to realise the latent popularity of the stage jig. Tarlton, whose vogue seems to have been immense, gauged the public taste for foolery to a nicety. He brought the stage jig to a high degree of perfection and during his time the form reached its apogee. After his death its popularity, firmly founded by him, increased, but it was on his work that later examples were formed. Probably, too, it was his insistence on the song-and-dance character of the jig which eventually ousted the dramatic dialogue jig from the stage and transformed the entertainment into something of what we now see on the music-hall stage, a mixture of antic-dancing and highly popularised versification set to tunes.

*Samuel Langford: Musical criticisms.* Edited by Neville Cardus. Oxford University Press. London: Humphrey Milford. 8s. 6d. net.

This is a memorial volume to Samuel Langford, musical critic of the *Manchester Guardian* from 1905 to his death in 1927. There is a sympathetic biographical note by the editor, and the rest of the book consists in Langford's own press notices. A remarkable fact is that nearly all of these excerpts from Langford's work are just ordinary concert notices, dreary enough material, it might be thought, to gather into a book. Who is to be expected to arouse sufficient enthusiasm to start reading such a collection of ghostly strictures on long-past performances? Can we justifiably be asked to interest ourselves in Kreisler's playing of the Grieg sonata in Manchester five years ago, or in the dead triumph of a *prima donna*, or a performance of Strauss's Alpine Symphony? The answer is: Yes, when the reports are those sent in by 'S. L.' The beginner at music criticism will, as has already been proved, get help from the volume, firstly, in how not to do things: Langford, like all good talkers, evidently found it no more easy than another man to be pithy and short. He was always delightful, but often long. But there is plenty of evidence of how things should be done: how to combine description of the way a thing was performed with discussion of the music itself. This is, in fact, what gives permanence to Langford's notices. The artists had to be mentioned, but there was always room made for opinions about what was on the programme.

Langford had a style full of charm (that is its truest definition). He also had the ability to dramatise an event. 'Before the end the applause became so demonstrative that it had an odd contrast with the miniature nature of the music'—an evocative sentence, enclosing the whole character of a Kreisler concert with its tail of encores and the body of adoring listeners.

*Purcell.* By Henri Dupré. Translated by Catherine Alison Phillips and Agnes Bedford. Knopf. New York.

Purcell's reputation has of late suffered some changes. With the European war an intensifying of national feeling brought about many erratic valuations in matters to do with art, and one of those to be most affected by fervent partisanship has been Purcell. In order to raise him to what was considered a reasonable stature it was thought necessary to disparage the age that followed his because it had not carried on his work. Handel was therefore held in particular disesteem for having diverted music in England from its natural courses by practising a style as foreign as his own birth. Now, after ten years, things have resumed a more normal relativity. We know more of Purcell's music, thanks to the labours of the Purcell Society and one or two distinguished musicians, and are able to live and let live in matters of merely national importance. One result of the vulgarisation of Purcell's music is before us now in a very readable short study by a Frenchman, the first of its kind to come from abroad. M. Dupré has been at pains to do justice to his subject. He has two preparatory chapters dealing with music before Purcell, and with Purcell's own musical education, and then proceeds to a reasoned discussion of the music, finally placing the composer high among his contemporaries. What is fresh in this book is the fact that it makes Purcell into a cosmopolitan figure and appraises him as a musician of international standing, the peer of Lully and precursor of Handel and J. S. Bach.

*Catalogue of the King's Music Library.* By the late W. Barclay Squire. Parts II and III. Printed by order of the Trustees of the British Museum, and sold there.

The late William Barclay Squire wrote himself the catalogue of the first volume, the Handel autographs and a few copies. The second volume contains the miscellaneous manuscripts of which a few are autographs, such as sixty-two anthems, welcome songs, etc., of Purcell, J. C. Bach's *Artaserse*, three hundred canons by Elway Bevan (or Bevin), and two motets in the handwriting of John Baldwin, whose work is so accurate and valuable that it almost ranks as an autograph. There are some also ascribed to John Eccles and Charles Wesley; and those of the Prince Consort have another interest. The third volume contains printed books. Among these the three hundred entries of early editions of Schubert's songs should be of interest to specialists. Part II is by Miss Hilda Andrews and Part III by Mr. W. C. Smith.

## REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

*De Muziek.* Amsterdam. May.

In Eitner there is a short note on the Netherlands (sixteenth century) composer Ludovicus Episcopus (or Bishop). Dr. G. van Doorslaer contributes the result of his researches on Episcopus (*sic*) to the present number. He has been able to fix Malines as the place where Episcopus worked, and 1595 as the date of his death. 1522 is given as a probable date of birth, thus making Episcopus a contemporary of three other Malines composers: Philippe de Monte (1521), Cyprian de Rore (1516) and Jean Lestainnier (1520). This article is worth attention. There follows an article criticising Dr. Rudolph Mengelberg's work on Dutch music and musicians in the latest edition of Grove's Dictionary. Ignoring the article's polemical side, there are some useful suggestions here for the next edition.

June.

A study of Jewish religious folk song by A. Z. Idelsohn, contained in an article that provides much useful information as to origins and styles, is continued from the last number. In 'East and West in music' Dr. Erwin Felber discusses the similarities which, despite contrasts in other directions, underlie certain aspects, chiefly melodic, of the music of the two racial divisions.

*La Rassegna Musicale.* Turin. May.

Sig. F. Torrefranca concludes his series of articles on 'I valori della musica' with an exhortation to young musicians to eschew sentimentality, to leave romanticism behind them, to live intensely in the present and at the same time take full possession of the heritage of old Italian music and of Italian folk song. An article by Sig. D. Petrini examines those critical utterances of Diderot which have to do with music. An article by Sig. R. de Rensis deserves mention for the glimpse it gives of Boito and Martucci. Some delightful letters from Boito are included.

June.

In an article on 'Music and words from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries' Sig. A. Cimbro compares the French *ars nova* (Machaut) with its sober and measured gait, and the Florentine *ars nova* where words take second place with a florid melismatic ornamentation. Sig. G. Pannain has a thoroughly good article on Albert Roussel, giving a useful survey of his work and the essence of its style. Sig. A. Parente writes on the aesthetics of music chiefly in regard to the theories of Hegel and Marselli.

*La Revue Musicale.* Paris. May-June.

A descriptive notice of Albert Roussel's operatic scores comes from Mlle. Nadia Boulanger. M. Henry Prunières contributes an interesting excerpt from his latest book on Lully. ('*La vie illustre et liber-*

tine de Jean Baptiste Lully.' Plon. Paris.) There is an illuminating article on the genesis of Fauré's 'Pénélope' with numerous quotations from the composer's letters. Some random notes on music in nineteenth century Paris, by M. Claude Laforêt, are diverting at moments.

#### July.

There is an excellent long article by M. Arthur Hoérée on Jacques Ibert, a French composer little known here, which makes one wish for a nearer acquaintance with these works. Dr. Paul Nettl writes on French music in Austria under Leopold the first. Finally, there is a lengthy article, exhaustively documented, on the Gramophone and its educational uses, by MM. Cœuroy and Clarence.

*Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft.* Leipzig. May.

Herr Alfred Seiffert writes on Resonance. This is stuff for scientists. It has all the appearance of thorough research. The same may be said of Herr Albert Wellek's twenty-eight pages on Colour and Music, a study of the relations of colour and sound with special reference to secondary sensibility in orientals. Both these articles are definitely for the specialist and the expert.

*Musikblätter des Anbruch.* Vienna. May.

An article by Herr Alfred Szendrei reviews the last five years of broadcasting in Germany. The writer is musical director at Leipzig. This article has a deal of useful information with regard to works performed, and artists engaged. Broadcast music seems, from what this article brings to light, to be more varied in Germany than is the case with our own programmes. Especially noticeable is the large number of operas performed. Herr Erwin Felber writes on Karl Szymanowski.

#### June; July.

Egon Wellez writes on the Byzantine ecphonetic signs, i.e., the marks placed over or under the words to indicate rise and fall of the reciting voice, somewhat as in the Rigveda. There is an analysis of some sixty pages of Schleiermacher, the theologian, on the æsthetics of music, the interest of which is that his lectures being delivered in 1825 he is, after Hegel, one of the earliest to touch on the subject in the modern manner. He classes music with the various forms of miming, as an art of accompaniment, and is accordingly put to it to find a place for instrumental music. A list of the principal accessions to the National Library at Vienna is printed.

*Pult und Taktstock.* Vienna. March-April.

Szigeti's remarks on the construction of Casella's new violin concerto are valuable. Mahler's fourth symphony was corrected by him late in life. These corrections have now come to light. Herr Erwin Stein writes about them, and in another article reviews the present state of music in the light of wireless and gramophone.

Reviews of Music are unavoidably held over.

## GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

### Orchestral.

#### H.M.V.

Elgar: *Wand of youth suite* No 1. (Sir Edward Elgar and the L.S.O.). This is a careful recording, just in detail, smooth in performance. Elgar's orchestral style needs this kind of treatment in recording, and when it gets it is very effective on the gramophone.

Mozart: *German Dances* arranged by Steinbach (Leo Blech and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra). The tone of the orchestra is remarkably satisfying in this record, and the performance of the dances is an example of the best kind of even-tempered, steady playing. Steinbach has kept fairly within bounds in arranging Mozart. The tunes themselves are delicious, and played with such perfect ensemble make an inimitable impression.

Donizetti: *Overture to 'La figlia del regimento'* (Gabriele Santini and members of the La Scala orchestra, Milan). Italian operatic music played by Italians ought to be good, and this is. The orchestra has the pleasantly harsh tone and hard attack of Italian opera singers. The music needs it. There is nothing subtle about Donizetti's overture, and excellent clean playing such as this suits it well.

#### Decca

Offenbach: *Overture to 'Orphée aux enfers'* (Basil Cameron and the Hastings Municipal Orchestra) is also completely unsubtle. The Hastings orchestra plays it well, though not with the brilliance or the precision of Milan. The notes are there, but the performance lacks grit. Not, for that matter, that much character can be put into the playing of Offenbach. But unless one sets out with the idea that the music is worth playing one can hardly make the hearer feel it is worth listening to. And Offenbach does provide more opportunities for good ensemble than are here taken.

#### H.M.V.

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 7 in A major* (Leopold Stokowski and the

Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra). Enough has been said about this record to allow us merely to register our concurrence in the general feeling of antipathy. The actual playing of this orchestra is excellent, wonderfully precise and evidently completely at one with the conductor. It is, then, all the more disappointing to find this fine material being wasted on a performance that is wholly unworthy its efforts. For there can be no excuse for the handling the music receives here. Beethoven is at least worth hearing if only played straight out, and great orchestras should see to it that his music gets proper treatment. Light and shade, also, suffer in this recording. Why is there no real *piano* at the opening of the slow movement? The succeeding *fortissimo* would then become all the more telling. One curious fact needs mention: the matter of balance in recording has been getting, of late, much better. But here things go back. In the Trio the bassoons are much too weak and the drums inaudible. Well, Philadelphians, try again.

### Operatic, with Orchestra

#### H.M.V.

Offenbach: *Mirror song from 'Contes d'Hoffmann'* (Rudolf Bockelmann and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich). Here is fine singing and still finer diction. German fits this song well, and Bockelmann's German is worth going far to hear. On the reverse side is the Toreador's song from Bizet's 'Carmen.' Bockelmann makes it the whole life of a toreador—and of the bull.

Puccini: *'Un bel di vedremo'* (from 'Butterfly') (Dusolina Giannini and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich). Puccini away from the stage sounds empty enough. Giannini's singing records well, her beautiful voice, with its rich quality and large range, managed perfectly. This is an excellent opera record.

There remain some more operatic records, mainly to be recommended for those readers who collect voices



rather than music. Pertile and Sheridan sing two duets from Puccini's 'Manon Lescaut' in the true ranting manner. Pertile comes through very well, Sheridan hardly carries at all. More Puccini (this time from 'La fanciulla del west') is sung by Alessandro Valente, good singing again, but monotonous music. It is a relief to turn from these to Bellini, who at least is simple and clear. Rosa Ponselle's records from 'Norma' are extraordinary. They should be got in duplicate in an attempt to perpetuate this lovely voice. Use a soft needle in a quiet room. The records are 'Casta diva' and 'Mira, O Norma,' the latter with Marion Telva, also a fine (contralto) voice.

#### Decca

Later Puccini is better to bear with than much of that noticed above, and Frank Titterton makes a pleasant record from 'Turandot.' His voice comes through (except for a final top note) with good quality, and his English is clear. On the other side of this record he sings an excerpt from Puccini's 'La fanciulla del west' with some of the same success. For the rest, has not the time come when gramophone companies could give mere operatic pyrotechnics a rest? Surely we have had enough of the 'Bell song' from Lakmé. Olga Olgina sings it here very ably, but what piffle it sounds, divorced from its stage setting. A teacher, or a pupil, might find some use in this record. Who else?

#### H.M.V.

In a slightly different category there is a double-sided record of 'Erbarme Dich Mein Gott' from J. S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion, sung by Rosette Auday, with violin obbligato by Franz Mairecker (orchestra, Vienna State Opera), conducted by Karl Alwin. Such an array of artists should have had better results. The singing is good in tone, but poorly phrased in many places. And the whole performance is hurried, giving a restless feeling out of keeping with the theme or the work itself. This is disappointing.

#### Decca

Delius: *Sea Drift* (Roy Henderson, New English Symphony Orchestra and Choir). This is a courageous venture and in undertaking it the company in question has shown themselves to be serious minded. The work is one of great difficulty for singers and players, and must have provided the recording mechanicians

with some hard problems. That they have not wholly succeeded is to be regretted, but that they have taken the trouble to carry this large piece of work through is still a fine feat and one which deserves congratulation. Delius is, in any case, not an easy composer to record. His rich textures and shifting timbres make clear reproduction hard to attain. The best parts of this record (there are six sides) are those where the soloist stands alone above the orchestra. Choral singing is liable to sound inextricable, and Delius's choral writing more so than any other. Here the chorus nearly always has a muddy tone, probably due as much to faulty production as to bad reproduction. The singers need more energy, as well as more certainty of intonation. Mr. Roy Henderson, no longer as fresh as when he first astonished London with his singing of this part (before oratorio had claimed him), is still very fine, and his singing alone makes this record worth having done, and worth buying. The orchestra should have been more careful of detail in this delicate score. They are often ragged, and tend to monotony of tone. Where, for instance, is the *diminuendo* on p. 20?—a small point, but the sum of missed small points mounts quickly up.

#### Chamber Music

##### H.M.V.

Grieg: *Sonata for violin and piano-forte in C minor* (Serge Rachmaninov and Fritz Kreisler). This is a strong combination and the performance is good. The sonata is not the best Grieg, and by far one of the least interesting violin sonatas. Naturally, in the hands of two great players it is always worth hearing, although it seems a pity to have troubled to record this in place of a better work. It must be noted that in this case the pianoforte tone is as shifting as ever.

Torrobá: *Sonatina in A major, Allegretto* (Andrés Segovia). This is delightful, the finest playing and no violence done to the music. On the reverse side there is a *Courante* by J. S. Bach. Both pieces are treated with great mastery. This record should be in every collection.

#### Solo Instruments

##### H.M.V.

Liszt: *Sonata del Petrarca in E major and Valse Improvisu* (Frederic Lamond). This is, from the recording point of view, a remarkably fair pianoforte record, which is saying a

great deal. The *Vals*, which is mainly light and speedy, comes through better. The *Sonetta* is the more difficult to register with its emphatic, slow melodic curves which cannot, it seems, do other than fade immediately in tone and even in pitch. The playing of these two sides is excellent.

Popper: *Spanish dance* (Pablo Casals). We feel the same about this as about the Grieg sonata, only more strongly. Popper's dance is not worth the wax it is recorded on. And that Casals should waste his and our time with such stuff! Violoncello literature may be sparse, but there must certainly be other things than this. Granados (*Spanish dance*) is on the other side, and is far ahead in musical worth. Of course the playing of both pieces is superb, which makes it all the more aggravating.

If the prodigy violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, wants to make a proper reputation for himself, apart from that occasioned by his youth, he must record better things than an *Allegro* by Fiorco and a piece by Ries, which he here plays very efficiently. Mischa Elman is infinitely more worth hearing (though his pieces are poor enough: a *Vocalise* by Rachmaninov and a *Caprice* by Saltarella) because his tone is more generous and his approach to the music somehow more musicianly.

Pergolesi (Ciampi?): *Air* ('*Tre giorni son che Nina*') arranged for violoncello (Cedric Sharpe). Good playing, but the whole thing is rather heavy. This song does not go satisfactorily without the words, which are so important for its proper understanding.

Valentini: *Gavotte* (Hans Kindler). A pleasing record. Kindler's violoncello playing is strong and his tone never harsh however much he presses it. On the reverse side is Kindler's own *Rumanian Sketch*, which anyhow shows off his technique adequately.

#### Songs with Orchestra Decca

Vaughan-Williams: *Three of the 'Songs of Travel'* (Dale Smith). These might have been better. The balance is unfairly weighted against the voice, and in any case Dale Smith does not come through with enough resonance to carry away from the instrument. There is a sensation of uneasy haste about the performance, and the singer's urgent manner does not help.

#### Choral H.M.V.

Purcell: *Remember not, Lord, our offences* (Canterbury Cathedral Choir). Something new and unusual comes the way of the collector of records in this great Purcell anthem, a magnificent specimen of the period. The singing is good—in the tradition, which gravely needs bettering.

*Two Hymns* (The Temple Choir). The Temple Church beats Canterbury Cathedral all along the line (as is perhaps right in a Choir with only Sunday services to prepare). Diction, attack, tone are all better. There is a slight tendency to open the vowels too wide, evidently in a laudable attempt to get pure color recorded. This record is good value.

Child: *O bone Jesu* (Westminster Abbey Special Choir) is a fine piece of recording of very good choral singing. The balance seems nearly always to have been successfully kept. The other side has Byrd's *Exsurge Domine*, still grander music and a thoroughly worthy performance.

The performance of the Dayton Choir is very expert, and when they manage to hide their cleverness the result is excellent. The gramophone suits them. Here they perform a Lotti *Crucifixus* and a Palestrina *Exultate Deo* with good tone and not too devastating a precision. The music comes through surprisingly well as such.

Sc. G.







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